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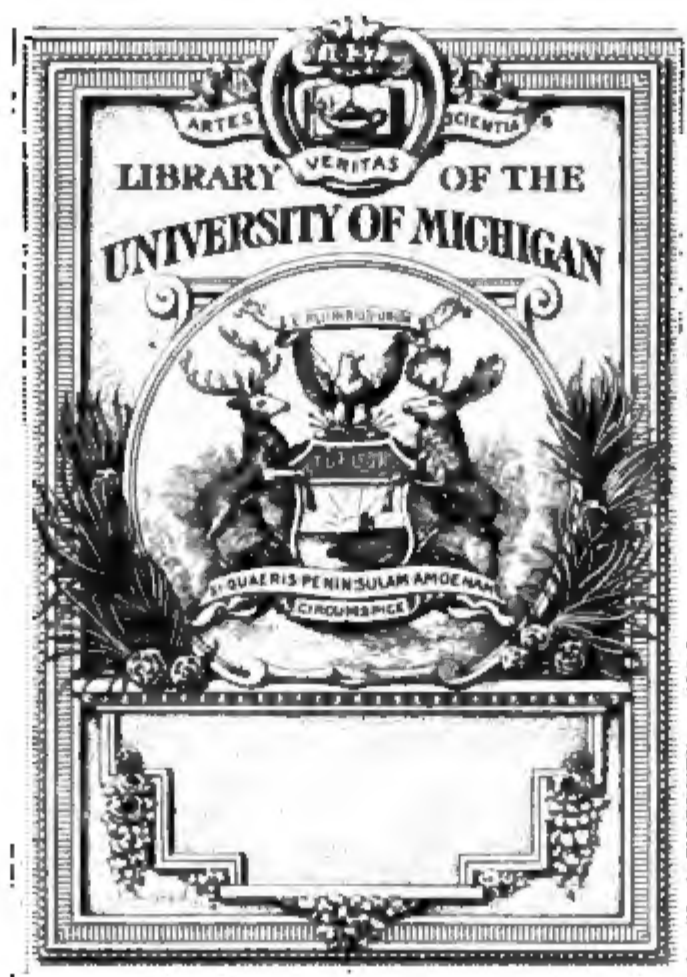
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IMPERIAL AFRICA

*THE RISE, PROGRESS AND
FUTURE OF THE BRITISH
POSSESSIONS IN AFRICA*

BY

MAJOR A. F. MOCKLER-FERRYMAN
F.R.G.S., F.Z.S.

(Oxfordshire Light Infantry)

AUTHOR OF "UP THE NIGER," "IN THE
NORTHERN LAND," &c.

VOL. I.

BRITISH WEST AFRICA

With numerous Maps and Illustrations



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1898

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TO
FIELD-MARSHAL
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
VISCOUNT WOLSELEY, K.P., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.
FROM WHOSE SUCCESSFUL MILITARY OPERATIONS IN WEST,
SOUTH, AND NORTH AFRICA HAVE RESULTED ENLIGHTENMENT
AND PROSPERITY TO THE AFRICAN RACES, AND A VAST
EXTENSION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE,
THIS VOLUME
IS, WITH HIS LORDSHIP'S PERMISSION,
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

IN the following pages I have endeavoured to bring the story of the British Possessions in West Africa up to date. Events move with such rapidity in this part of our Empire, and so many burning questions come before the public each year, that without the latest information on the subject, one is entirely at sea. To supply this latest information, therefore, has been my main object, while at the same time I have done all in my power to fill in details—suggested by personal knowledge—which have been omitted by former chroniclers. The several problems which remain to be solved will be found discussed at length, and though, doubtless, an abler pen would have done greater justice to the subject, I am sanguine enough to believe that the material which I have been able to collect and put together will prove of some assistance to anyone anxious to acquire a knowledge of the present state of British West Africa. It is more as a simple work of reference, than as anything else, that I offer this volume to the public, though I venture to think that in it will be found many matters of interest to the general reader. In conclusion, I would express a hope that, by the perusal of this description of the country, Englishmen may be

induced to change their opinion of what they have probably always been accustomed to regard as a "White Man's Grave," or a "Land of Death," and to think of it as a valuable portion of the British Empire.

A. F. MOCKLER-FERRYMAN.

July, 1898.

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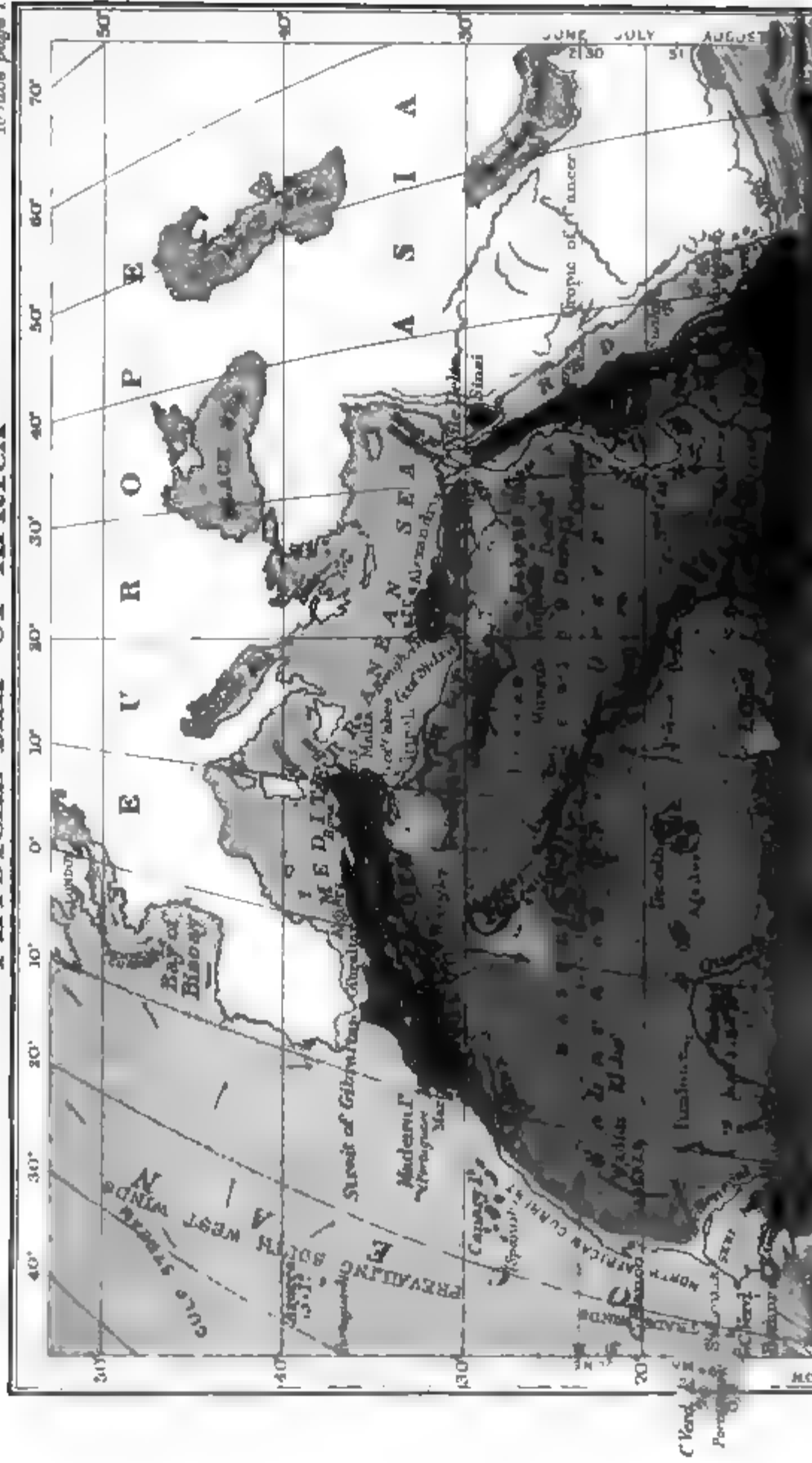
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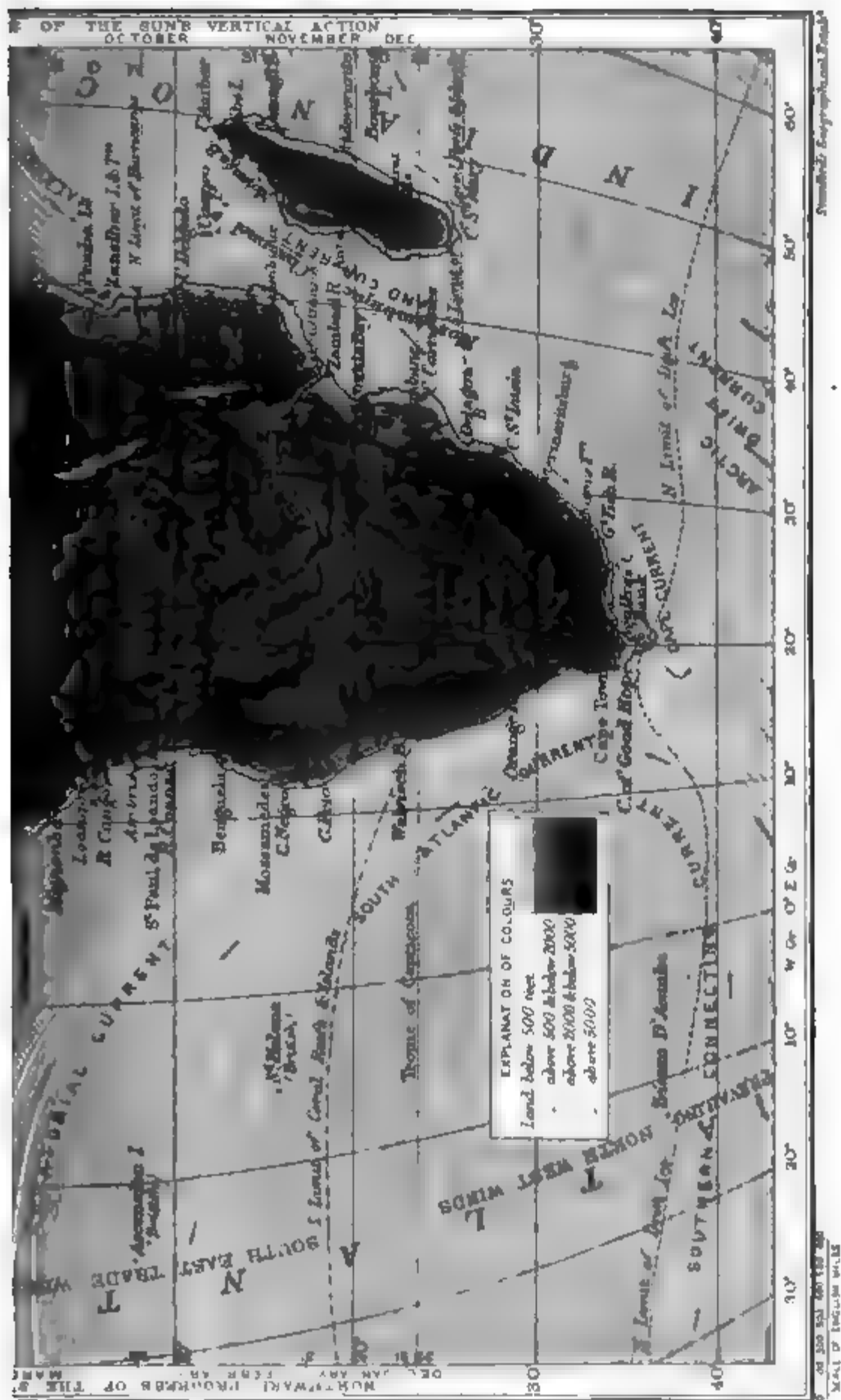
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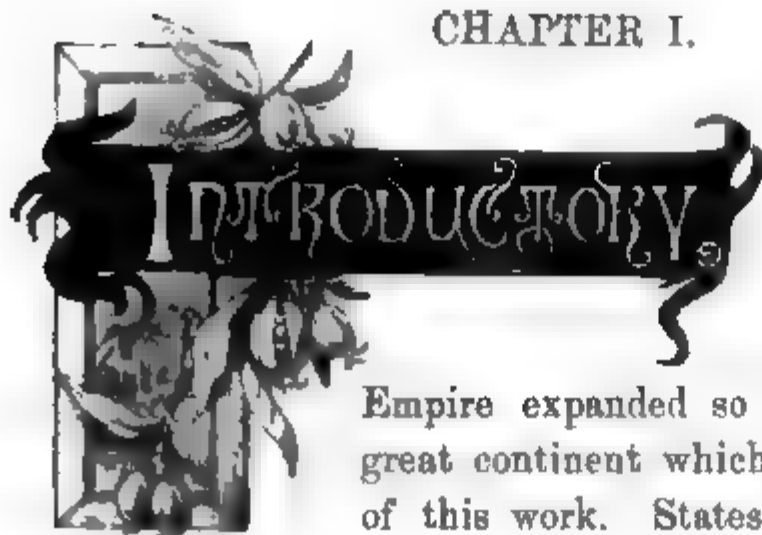




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IMPERIAL AFRICA.

CHAPTER I.



NOWHERE, of late years, has our

Empire expanded so rapidly as in the great continent which forms the subject of this work. States, with populations so dense as those of modern Europe,

realizing that their overflow can only be "accommodated by founding other States," have naturally turned their eyes towards the comparatively unexplored and unexploited regions of the globe; and it remained to Africa to furnish the wherewithal for this final scramble for new territory amongst the Great Powers. The century now drawing to its close has witnessed such vast acquisitions, on the part of Europe, of hitherto savage, or at best only semi-civilized portions of the Dark Continent, that but little now remains to be parcelled out, and tracts which but a few years ago were deemed worthless have of late become the subject of jealous dispute — even the Sahara, with its barren wastes and its clouds of drifting sand, has been included in a "sphere of influence." A comparison of the map of Africa of a hundred years ago with that of to-day will give the reader an idea of what has been going on, and will prove to him that England has taken no more than her share of the plunder, for, as these pages

will show, she has acquired but a third of what she is justly entitled to ; and were the country to be divided in proportion to the money and lives spent by each European power in exploration and exploitation, then, it is no idle boast to say, England could lay claim to all Africa south of the Sahara and Egypt—if not, indeed, to Egypt itself. To England alone is due the present position of Europe in Africa ; most other nations have merely gained a footing in the land at the expense of England, yet they make every endeavour nowadays to wrest from us lands which, by right of priority of discovery and priority of treaties made with the natives, can be claimed by no one but Great Britain.¹

Until 1884, Africa south of the Sahara was of little account in the eyes of Europe ; England was quietly improving and extending her various possessions, France seemed contented with her Congo territory, Portugal with those scraps of the continent which she had managed to retain, and the boundaries of the Congo and Orange Free States and the Transvaal were clearly defined. In the above year, however, there fell a thunderbolt in Europe ; Germany, desiring to found a colonial empire, suddenly annexed Namaqualand and Damaraland on the south-west coast, the Cameroons and Togoland on the west coast, and proclaimed a protectorate over an immense tract of country adjacent to Zanzibar on the east coast. This undreamt-of action on the part of Germany brought about what has been called the “scramble for Africa,” and from it has arisen a series of conferences and boundary commissions, to decide for the three principal scramblers—England, France and Germany—the niceties of spheres of influence and hinterland. Thus has the partition of Africa among the three great European powers been brought about, and at the present

¹ A detailed account of French and German claims in West Africa will be found in Chapter XXI.

moment there remains hardly a square mile of the continent to which one or other power cannot lay claim either by right of hinterland or by right of treaty.¹ The following table gives approximately in square miles the areas of the African possessions of the various European Powers, as well as the areas of those territories which are still independent or unappropriated:—

ESTIMATED AREA AND POPULATION OF AFRICA.²

—	Area.	Population.	Inhabitants to the Square Mile.
British	2,119,160	43,227,700	20
Portuguese	826,730	5,472,000	7
French	3,426,790	32,819,000	10
Spanish	153,830	443,000	3
German	884,810	8,370,000	9
Italian	548,880	5,150,000	8
Congo State	905,090	16,300,000	18
Boer State and Swaziland .	177,750	764,000	4
EUROPE IN AFRICA . . .	9,043,040	112,545,700	12
Morocco	154,500	6,000,000	39
Tripoli and Fezzan . . .	338,470	1,000,000	3
Egypt	349,170	7,600,000	22
The Mahdi's dominions to 10° N.	609,300	5,800,000	9
Liberia	51,970	1,000,000	19
Unappropriated	828,880	2,860,000	18
Lakes Chad, Victoria, &c. .	70,480		
ALL AFRICA	11,445,810	136,805,700	12

From the above it will be seen that Europe has a voice in the affairs of more than 80 per cent. of the inhabitants of

¹ For fuller particulars see *The Partition of Africa*, by J. Scott-Keltie; 1893.

² From *Whitaker's Almanack*.

Africa, and it requires to be little of a prophet to foretell that within a decade the whole of the continent, with the exception, perhaps, of Liberia,¹ will have lost its independence. At first sight, it seems extraordinary that European nations should trouble themselves to such an extent about tracts of land which to all appearance can never be of any value, but a study of the population statistics of Great Britain and Germany will be sufficient to prove that unless new industries and new markets be opened up, and with all speed, starvation must stare us in the face. It is not a question of "land-grabbing," for in the greater part of Africa the land itself is worthless to the European; the desideratum is the willingness of the people to exchange for goods of European manufacture such commodities as are found in their country, and which are necessary to civilized Europe. Much misconception appears to exist as to the exact meaning of the term "sphere of influence"; it may be well, therefore, to throw a little light on the matter. When the great rush above referred to commenced, it was at once seen that unless some measures were taken there would arise unpleasant disputes between the different European Powers who had launched expeditions and despatched officials to annex new countries in Africa. A *modus vivendi* was, therefore, arranged, and the map of Africa was divided up with ruler and pencil, such lines forming temporary boundaries confining the actions of the different Powers interested. Each Power retained whatever territory it could at the time establish a claim to—as a rule certain strips of the coast—and, in order that trade with the interior might remain unhampered, these coast possessions were apportioned a given amount of back-

¹ The integrity of the Republic of Liberia (founded in 1823) is guaranteed by Great Britain and the United States of America, though France, it may be mentioned, has of late years been endeavouring to get a footing in the country.

ground, or, as it was termed "hinterland," within which the particular European Power should be permitted to extend its influence. There was no actual distribution of the land, but merely an understanding among the Powers that each should have certain spheres within which the other Powers would not interfere. This briefly is what was intended by the agreement, but there were, of course, numerous provisos the principal of which related to the annexation of fresh territories. In the case of intended annexation¹ (or extension by protection) by a Power, it was necessary that the other Powers should receive information of the claim, which had to be proved by the production of treaties made with the natives. Theoretically, the "sphere of influence" arrangement was excellent; practically, however, there were many difficulties in the way of its working smoothly. It was never for a moment imagined that the pencil lines on the map could remain as definite boundaries of territory possessed by the different European nations, since, for instance, they might run through the centre of a tribe, or even of a town; it was, therefore, arranged that when a Power had annexed, or proclaimed a protectorate over, its hinterland up to the temporary boundary line, then that Power and any other Power with an adjacent sphere of influence should appoint commissioners to proceed to the spot, to survey and lay down the actual boundary line. Several of these frontier delimitations have already taken place, and others are now in progress, though it must be many years before the boundaries of the whole country are clearly defined.

Africa is so well known nowadays that it is almost unnecessary to say anything about the configuration of the

¹ It is erroneous to suppose that annexation in Africa carries with it acquisition of land; practically it implies merely a right to see that the country is properly governed; any land desired by Europeans has to be bought or rented from the natives.

country, neither are we now discussing Africa as a whole, but rather such Western portions of it as have come into the possession of Great Britain. Still, there are a few points about the country generally which it may be well to recall to the reader's memory, as they will aid him in following the descriptions of the various British possessions with which this volume deals. Disregarding such matters as the shape, size, and situation of the great continent, we pass to what is of greatest importance, viz. the relative heights or levels of the land. When we turn to the physical map we find that all along the coast-line there is a belt of low-lying land, varying in width from a few miles to a hundred or more; then comes a belt of plateau at an elevation up to 2000 feet above the sea, then further plateaux between 2000 and 5000 feet. Again we find a higher plateau, and, finally, occasional mountain ranges and peaks attaining a height of 18,000 feet. Some years ago, before the interior had been thoroughly explored, Africa was likened to an inverted dish; this description, however, we now know to be hardly accurate, implying as it does that above the coast-line (the rim of the dish) there was only one plateau of uniform level. Neither can we compare the country to a number of inverted dishes one above the other and diminishing in size, since the areas of the different plateaux vary immensely, and do not commence at an equal distance from the coast. The great point, however, to remember is that there is a succession of steps, not in any way regular, but, nevertheless, as a rule, well-defined by high, scarped cliffs. A second point worthy of notice is the lake system, though this is more remarkable in the east than in the west of the continent, the only large lake with which we are concerned at present being Lake Chad, which forms a portion of the eastern boundary of our sphere of influence in the Niger Protectorate. As to the rivers, it may perhaps be noted that, though not as numerous as one might



WEST AFRICAN RIVER SCENE.

[To face page 7.]

expect from the area of the country, they are of immense size and length.¹ These form a natural highway for commercial and other purposes, but, owing to the presence of rapids, their navigation in many instances is seriously impeded; their mouths, however, are invaluable as harbours, which otherwise are almost entirely absent, yet even the mouths of the largest rivers are but poor harbours, since not unfrequently the bar across them can only be crossed by ocean-going steamers at high tide.

West Africa, by which is here meant that portion of the country lying between the Sahara on the north and the Atlantic on the south, and between the Gambia River on the west and Lake Chad on the east,² differs in no particular degree from the rest of Tropical Africa. There are present the low-lying belt of coast-line, the succession of plateaux, the higher mountains, the wide and long waterways, and the scarcity of harbours. But, the reader will ask, if West Africa is so like the other parts, why should we hear so much of the evil influences of its climate, when the same parallels of latitude in East Africa are considered almost healthy. There are several answers to the question. The West Coast is much nearer to England than the East Coast, more intercourse has been maintained with it, it has been the residence of Europeans for hundreds of years compared with tens of years, and its European residents are to this day numbered by hundreds in place of tens. The West Coast, therefore, has always been before our eyes; of the East Coast we know comparatively little, and it may be that the one is no more unhealthy than the other. Then, again, the trade of West Africa is essentially a coast trade; the merchant never leaves

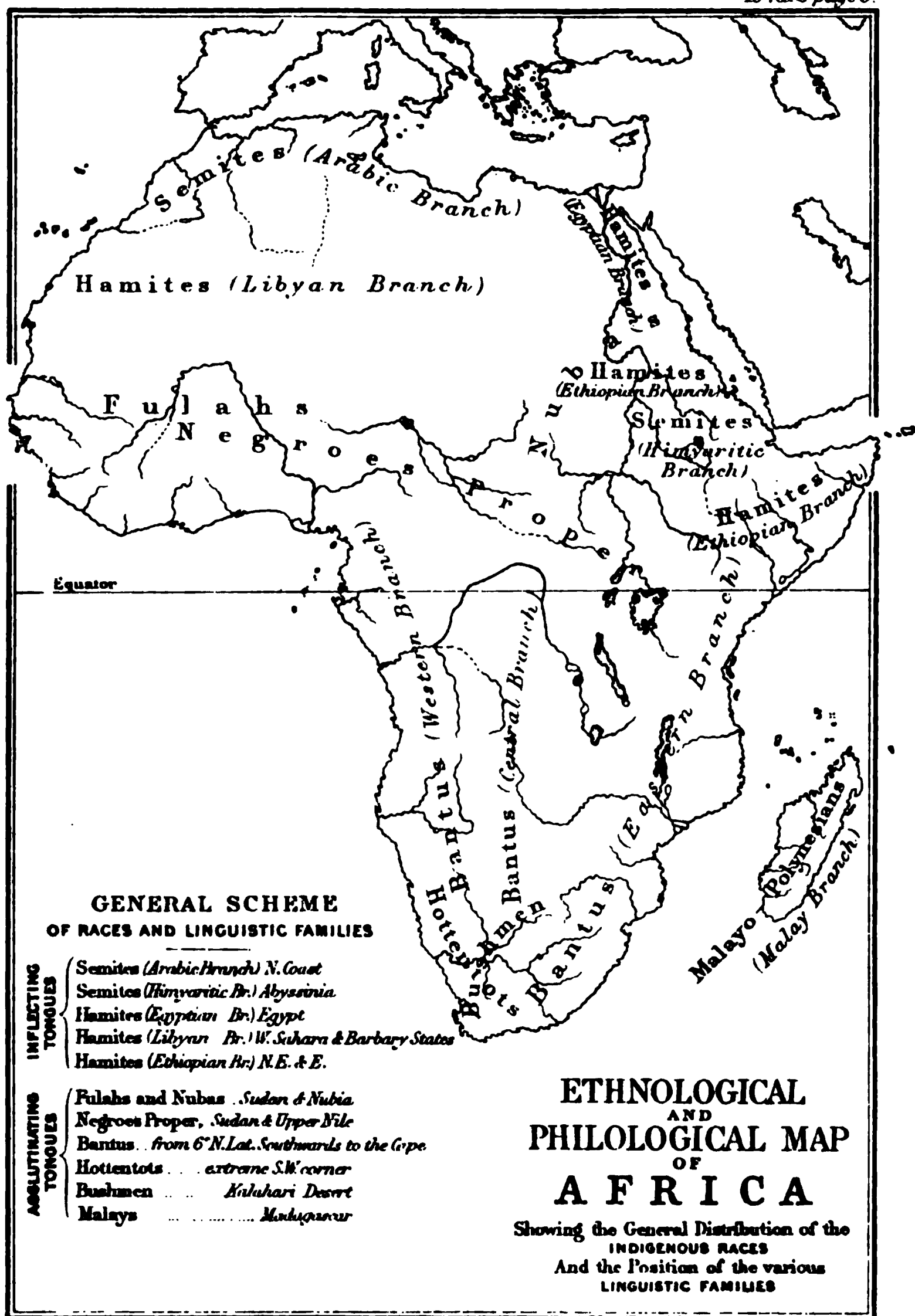
¹ A peculiarity of the rivers is that they rise at low elevations, and are fed almost entirely by surface drainage. The source of the Niger (with a total length of 2600 miles) is only 2800 feet above sea-level.

² All north of the Equator.

the malaria zone, as the palm oil and other products are brought down to him by the natives ; whereas in East Africa the tendency has been for the European to get away into the interior—to Uganda or other high and healthy spots—and there make purchases, or to live and conduct business on the island of Zanzibar. Climatologists may possibly be able to put forward scientific reasons for the unhealthiness of the West Coast of Africa ; with such matters, however, we need not now trouble ourselves, for it is not so much our object to persuade the reader that the West Coast is unhealthy or otherwise, as to prove to him that, in our possessions in West Africa, we have a vast tract of country which cannot fail to be of inestimable value to future generations of Englishmen.

Let us now take a general survey of West Africa as it concerns British interests. Summarizing the possessions of Great Britain in West Africa as now existing, we find them to be as follows :—The Crown Colonies¹ of Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Lagos, the Niger Coast Protectorate, and the territories of the Royal Niger Company, the rise and progress of each of which will be discussed in separate chapters. With a knowledge of the characteristic features of the country, it can be easily understood that, within this area, covering as it does thirty degrees of longitude and ten of latitude, there is an immense variety of country and of climate. All these British Possessions have their foundation on the coast (unless, perhaps, we except the territories of the Royal Niger Company), and from the seaboard they stretch inland on hinterland and sphere of influence principles until some other European Power is met with. Thus the colony of Gambia consists of the river of the same name and a few miles of bank ; Sierra Leone of 220 miles of

¹ *Colony* is perhaps a misnomer, as no place in West Africa is used for purposes of European colonization.



Sturtevant's Geog. Estab^{ls}, London

The Imperial Press, Limited.

coast-line with the adjacent territories for a short distance inland; the Gold Coast of 350 miles of coast-line, and the interior as far as the northern boundaries of Ashanti; while Lagos, the Niger Coast Protectorate, and the territories of the Royal Niger Company are contiguous, and, with a coast-line of some 400 miles, extend as far north as the 15th parallel N. latitude. The aboriginal inhabitants of all these British possessions are negroes pure and simple, but the population has received, by the advent of the Fulahs¹ from the east, a certain admixture of blood—whether Semitic, Hamitic, or of a distinct family ethnologists have never been able to decide. The main point, however, is that throughout British West Africa, on the coast or inland as far as Lake Chad, there are only two African races, viz. Negroes and Fulahs. The latter have a language of their own, but the distinct languages and dialects of the Negroes are, like their minor divisions or tribes, almost innumerable.² The aborigines, again, were all pagans, and such the majority of the negro tribes still remain, but the Fulahs are Mohammedans—zealous propagators of Islam—consequently their invasion of the West and Central Soudan³ has gradually resulted in the conversion of the heathen, until at the present day we find Mohammedans established even at the coast towns.

Five centuries and a half have passed since modern Europeans first visited the West Coast of Africa,⁴ and commenced to make its history; before this it was a region known vaguely to the ancients, but considered as of little real importance. In these 550 years there have been several well-marked periods or epochs, which we may enumerate

¹ *Vide* Chapter XIII.

² *Vide* Chapter XVII.

³ Soudan (a shortened form of Bilad-es-Sudan) means literally “the country of the blacks.”

⁴ A Portuguese expedition reached the Gambia River in 1446.

under the following heads:—1st period, discovery and exploration (by the Portuguese); 2nd period, legitimate trade; 3rd period, slave trade; 4th period, gold and slave trade; 5th period, exploration of the interior; 6th period, occupation by companies; 7th period, Government administration; 8th period, slave trade superseding everything; 9th period, exploration; 10th period, legitimate commerce and philanthropy; 11th period, Crown colonies, &c.; and 12th period, spheres of influence. No one can assert that the development of this part of Africa has been rapid or, until the last half century, an advantage to the natives; for, previous to the abolition of the slave trade, the presence of Europeans on the West Coast was instrumental in retarding the civilization of the people. Every man's hand was against his neighbour, and the weakest went to the wall—or rather to the slave-ship waiting on the coast. But even the abolition of the oversea slave trade did not end the African's miseries; slave-raiding for home consumption still went on, and the European, in return for the legal commodities which he now took away, supplied the chiefs with arms and ammunition wherewith to carry on their raiding operations, and flooded the country with vile spirits. All this, however, we shall dwell on in a later chapter; it is enough to say here that, until ten years ago (or even less), European influence in West Africa, excepting, of course, the labours of missionaries and philanthropists, was a veritable curse to the country. Happily, Europe has at last opened her eyes to the wrongs so long inflicted on the people, with the result that the whole country has now a fair prospect of being turned to good account. Before proceeding to discuss in detail each of our possessions, it will be well to lay before the reader a few comparative statistics, from which he will be able to see at a glance the relative value to England, from a commercial point, of the several colonies and protectorates:—

BRITISH POSSESSIONS IN WEST AFRICA.¹

	Approximate area in miles. ²	Approximate Population. ³	Public Revenue.	Public Expe- diture.	Total Imports.	Total Exports.	Approximate in- crease in exports in last ten years.	Distance from England in days
			£	£	£	£	£	
Gambia . . .	3,550	100,000	26,172	25,301	110,324	115,061	Nil.	11
Sierra Leone . .	30,000	600,000	101,002	110,182	491,698	410,033	100,000	15
Gold Coast . . .	50,000	2,000,000	237,460	282,278	778,000	702,111	500,000	21—30
Lagos . . .	21,000	3,000,000	147,040	144,483	815,811	983,508	350,000	22—26
Royal Niger Com- pany . . .	600,000	30,000,000	90,000	90,000	—	—	—	30—35
Niger Coast Pro- tectorate . . .	15,000	1,000,000	155,613	143,044	760,973	413,333	—	30—36

¹ From latest available returns.² In most cases very rough.



CHAPTER II.

GAMBIA.

THE most northerly, and, perhaps, the oldest, of our West Coast possessions, receives its name from the large river, known as the Gambia, which, taking its rise in the Futa Jallon country, flows for a distance of some 500 miles, almost due west, to enter the Atlantic in N. Lat. $13^{\circ} 13'$. The earliest knowledge that we have of this district is derived from Portuguese explorers, who, as far back as the fifteenth century, were engaged, under the auspices of their government, in the endeavour to discover the kingdom of a reputed native Christian ruler.¹

Although the primary object of their expeditions resulted in failure, vast strides were made in the collection of in-

¹ "Prester John."—"The origin of this mysterious name, which formed the guiding star to the Portuguese in their career of discovery, is somewhat difficult to trace. It attached itself originally to the centre of Asia, where it was reported by the early travellers, particularly by Rubruquis, that a Christian monarch of that name actually resided. The report appears to have been founded on the nominal conversion of a Tartar prince, by missionaries belonging to the sect of the Nestorians. The search accordingly, in that direction, proved altogether fruitless. At length it was rumoured very confidently, that on the Eastern Coast of Africa, there did exist a Christian sovereign, whose dominions stretched far into the interior. Thenceforth it appeared no longer doubtful that this was the real Prester John, and that the search had hitherto been made in a wrong direction." *Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels in Africa*. By Hugh Murray; 1818. Later authorities are of opinion that Prester John was none other than the King of Abyssinia.

formation regarding the hitherto unknown countries of the interior. The Portuguese, however, did not make any great effort to retain possession of the lands they had discovered, and British traders, seeking new markets, soon became aware of the advisability of establishing trade in this, the nearest West African river to England. Thus, in the sixteenth century, the small and isolated enterprises of a few English merchants laid the foundations of a regular trade between the Gambia and Great Britain¹—a trade which grew fairly prosperous, and which at one time seemed likely to become of very considerable importance.

From the Gambia the Portuguese sailed along the coast, and their intercourse with the natives led them to believe that, somewhere inland, there existed a veritable Eldorado in the shape of an unlimited supply of gold. No sooner did this information reach England than the idea was entertained of penetrating into the interior by way of the Gambia, and in 1618 a Company² was formed to equip an expedition, with the object of reaching the land of gold, and of entering into commercial relations with Timbuctoo. The command was given to one, George Thompson, who successfully ascended the river for some distance, but only eventually to be murdered, together with all his party, by the natives. He had, however, reached Tenda, a point in the interior hitherto unexplored by Europeans, and his successor, Richard Jobson, whom the Company despatched from England, in 1620, with reinforcements, found that Thompson had established a trading station at Oranto, and had everywhere left behind him marks of his great energy and dogged determination. Jobson pursued his way up stream, and overcoming the almost

¹ In 1588, Queen Elizabeth granted a charter to a British Company to trade with Gambia.

² The Company of Adventurers of London trading into Africa, promoted by Sir Robert Rich, afterwards Earl of Warwick.

insuperable difficulties of navigation, finally arrived, at the end of January, 1620, at the scene of Thompson's murder. Here he made inquiries about the gold country, and was informed that "four-moons' journey" into the interior there were cities roofed with solid gold, but for some inexplicable reason Jobson pushed no further ahead, contenting himself with the knowledge that he had acquired from vague native reports.

His stay at Tenda was marked by a friendly intercourse established with the natives, and before he left, he had bought the kingdom outright "for a few bottles of his best brandy." Jobson's reign was of short duration, for he decided to return forthwith to the coast, and communicate his explorations to the Company. He reached England in safety (but not without the loss of most of his companions), and doubtless the exaggerated accounts which he brought home commenced that extraordinary belief in the possibilities of "Timbuctoo, the Mysterious," which has hardly yet faded away. Whether Jobson, himself, honestly shared this belief in a golden Africa it is impossible to say, though it is perhaps noteworthy that he never had sufficient enterprise to return to the country which he had explored, or to the kingdom which had been ceded to him.¹

Although for a century no attempt was made to continue the investigations of Jobson, the Gambia had gradually become a rendezvous of British trading vessels, and when, in 1723, the Royal African Company turned its attention to the river, a well-established trade existed with the natives on its banks; trading stations had grown up at various points, and this African river bade fair to rival the East Indies in the matter of commerce. A fort had been built on a rocky island

¹ *Voyage for the Discovery of the River Gambra, and the Golden Trade of Tombuto, in 1620-21.* By Captain R. Jobson. Astley's Collection, vol. ii., 1745-7.

in the river, and named, after the reigning sovereign, Fort James ; moreover, the British Government, without going so far as appropriating the country, deputed certain officials to look after the interests of our countrymen, who already had rivals in the French and Portuguese. The first expedition sent out by the Royal African Company was entrusted to Captain Bartholomew Stibbs, who, on reaching Fort James¹ at the end of 1723, found many difficulties placed in his way ; Governor Glynn, to whom he had been recommended, was dead ; Governor Willy, his successor, was suffering from mental disease, which within a few days proved fatal ; and it was not until much time had been wasted, that Mr. Orfeur, the new governor, provided Stibbs with the canoes necessary to navigate the upper waters of the Gambia. At length the little party, consisting of some sixteen Englishmen, got away, and, after the usual difficulties, reached Tenda, where, following the example of Jobson, Stibbs remained for a short while and then retraced his steps, without adding anything of value to our knowledge of the country.² From that time the African Company confined itself to improving the trade and opening up factories in the better-known parts of the river, and Moore, the Company's chief agent, appears to have been a man of very considerable ability, to whom his employers were indebted for many a successful undertaking.

From this time, trade on the Gambia increased year by year, and if gold were not forthcoming, at any rate there was no scarcity of slaves for shipment to the plantations of the New World and the West Indies, and there was a fair quantity of ivory and other valuable produce to be exchanged

¹ Fort James, eighteen miles above Bathurst, was attacked and captured in 1719 by the notorious pirate Davis.

² *Voyage up the Gambia in 1724, for making Discoveries and improving the Trade of that River.* By Captain B. Stibbs. Astley's Collection, vol. ii., 1745-7.

for the goods of British merchants. Unfortunately, however, the men trading with the natives of the Gambia were not, as a rule, of the stamp who do credit to their mother country, and as years went on, their standard of morality grew lower; so that, towards the close of the last century, we find that drunkenness and even robbery from their employers were not the worst evils to which the British factors were addicted. What Gambia might have been if things had been otherwise, it is impossible to say, though, as long as the inhuman traffic in slaves was legitimate, it was only natural that traders of all nationalities should become debased and depraved in their habits. The horrors attendant on this nefarious trade will be fully discussed later on, suffice it to say here that the enrichment of the planters of America and the West Indies by the importation of African negroes had much, if not everything, to say to the backwardness of Africa. What was it possible for the savage to think of the European, whose only apparent object in visiting Africa was to carry off himself and his relations into slavery? Could he see any advantages to be derived from a civilization whose votaries stooped to every mean device in order to enrich themselves, stirring up strife where hitherto peace had existed, and inducing the black man by the introduction of vile spirits to sell not only his best friends, but oftentimes himself and his country for the sake of a few bottles of brandy?

But Englishmen were beginning to tire of the oft-repeated stories of the wealth of West Africa; a century and a half had passed since Jobson had brought home the tales of the cities of gold, and, so far, little or no gold had been forthcoming. Gambia had gradually become the resort of men who could do no good anywhere else, and who, in nine cases out of ten, succumbed to the climate and rum, without making any attempt to increase the trade of the river with the interior. Matters were thus at stagnation point, when

there arose in England a desire to once more probe the mysteries of Central Africa and discover the resources of the country. A number of influential men, headed by Sir Joseph Banks (President of the Royal Society), formed themselves, in 1788, into the African Association,¹ and determined to leave no stone unturned in the attempt to penetrate to the country watered by the great Niger River. Theorists there were, at this time, who maintained that the Gambia was the mouth of the Niger, but the African Association held other views, and decided that, the Gambia having proved itself by no means a good starting-point for the interior, some other route must be found. Accordingly, after consulting the vague maps then existing, the Association despatched a certain John Ledyard to Egypt, with instructions to strike south-west, across the desert, and try to discover the Niger; but Ledyard never got beyond Cairo, having contracted a fever of which he died on the eve of his departure. The Association next selected a Mr. Lucas to carry on the work of Ledyard, but the point of departure was changed to Tripoli, and thence a start was made in February, 1789. Fate was again, however, against the expedition, which, after a journey of five days, was forced to return owing to its inability to make friends with the Arab tribes, through whose country it wished to pass. Defeated in the north, the African Association directed its attentions to the west coast, and, in 1791, Major Houghton starting from the Gambia, passed eastwards to Medina, the capital of Wuli, and to Bambuk by the route which was afterwards followed by Mungo Park. How much further he travelled was never known, for reports came back that he had fallen a victim to the treacherous Tuaregs of the Sahara. Three years later, Watt and Winterbottom journeyed inland from Sierra Leone

¹ Afterwards granted a charter, and, later, incorporated with the Royal Geographical Society.

for a distance of sixteen days' march, only to be eventually forced by the natives to return to the coast. Now came on the scene that young Scotchman, Mungo Park, whose name has become famous as the greatest explorer that West Africa has ever known, but whose two journeys were so intimately connected with the Niger country that we shall reserve a description of them for a later chapter. Park's travels commenced at Gambia in 1795, and ended, on his second journey, at Boussa, on the Middle Niger, in 1805; but, during this period, the African Association, who had originally brought him to light, had other irons in the fire, employing amongst others Hornemann and Nicholls, the former from the north, the latter from the south, to carry out the main object of reaching the Niger. With these enterprises, however, we are not now concerned, since they had no connection with the Gambia, though it was necessary to refer to them in order to acquaint the reader with the fact that the African Association was indefatigable in its endeavours to explore the interior of West Africa.

Henceforward the Gambia was abandoned as a means of communicating with Timbuctoo and the Niger; it was unsuited as a base of operations, and it soon relapsed into its previous position—a centre of the oversea slave trade, and a minor British trading-station. Such it remained for some years, and although it had been an acknowledged British possession as far back as 1783,¹ it was not until 1807 that our Government considered it of sufficient importance to merit anything like direct administration. In that year it was placed under the Government of Sierra Leone; in 1843 it became a separate colony, and again twenty-three years later it was formally annexed to Sierra Leone. It remained a dependency of that colony until 1888, when it threw off the yoke, and struck out a line for itself as a distinct British

¹ Treaty of Versailles.

Colony. The actual area of the colony at that time was estimated at rather less than seventy square miles, though a protectorate had been proclaimed over adjacent territories, and in 1891 an Anglo-French Boundary Commission fixed the limits of this protectorate by a line giving ten kilomètres on each bank of the river for 250 miles to the colony, and in addition the whole of the navigable waters of the Vintang Creek, the Barraconda Falls¹ becoming the boundary between France and England on the Gambia River.

The protectorate had for some years been troubled by two slave-raiding chiefs, Fodi Kabba and Fodi Silah, who assumed a threatening attitude towards the Boundary Commission. Though the former had made a treaty with the French, at the end of 1891 he became so troublesome in what had now been formally acknowledged as British territory, that successful measures were taken to expel him. With Fodi Silah the Government did not deal until February, 1894, when an expedition was organized under Captain Gamble, R.N., and Colonel Corbet. Captain Gamble, who commanded the naval brigade, burned two villages, but on withdrawing to the boats was led, by the native guide, into an ambush, which resulted in a loss of fifteen killed and forty-seven wounded. On reinforcements arriving, some severe fighting took place, when the enemy was completely routed, Fodi Silah himself taking refuge in French territory, where he afterwards died. The defeat of these two powerful chiefs produced such an effect that the Colony has been untroubled since, and the inhabitants have gradually settled down to peaceful pursuits, knowing that, under British rule, where they sow they will reap. Such in brief is the history of Gambia since British traders first visited the river—a history not perhaps very remarkable, but interesting as showing how it became a part of our Empire.

¹ 257 miles above Bathurst.

Let us now see what this little Colony, at the present time, consists of. On the map of Africa it is represented by the thinnest streak of red that it is possible to insert on either side of the river; in reality Gambia (with its protectorate) comprises a total area of 3550 square miles, and is composed of the Island of St. Mary, British Kombo, Albreda,¹ the Ceded Mile,² McCarthy's Island, and other minor islands and riverside territories. The seat of government is at Bathurst (St. Mary's Island), a small native town which was founded in 1816 as a settlement for liberated slaves and British traders driven by the French from Senegal. The approach from the sea is uninteresting, and devoid of much picturesqueness; the coast-line is low-lying and fringed with mangroves and palm trees, and the river banks are similar, though the river itself is a fine sheet of water, navigable at all times by ocean steamers.³ The first sight which greets the new-comer is not a pleasant one, and is calculated to carry his thoughts back to the depressing tales which he has read on his voyage from England; this is the cemetery, which lies on the left bank just within the river's mouth. A short distance higher up stands Government House—a square, solid, and well white-washed building—facing the river; while, opposite the anchorage, are the other official quarters, barracks, traders' stores, and the like. A small mud battery guards the entrance to the river, though whether it is anything more than a make-believe fort to impress the natives is very doubtful; still, there are signs that the place is not defenceless, for a party of Hausa constabulary may be seen drilling assiduously close at

¹ Acquired in 1857, on the withdrawal of the French.

² One mile width of river bank, opposite Bathurst, and some forty miles above, ceded by the King of Bara for an annual subsidy of £100.

³ There is twenty-six feet of water on the Gambia bar, and vessels drawing under ten feet can navigate 240 miles up stream.



BATHURST, GAMBIA (*Two views*).

[To face page 21.

hand. Shaded by an avenue of magnificent *bombax* and other wide-spreading trees is the native market, where, at any rate, the newly-arrived Englishman will find much food for reflection. He is at last in Africa, and in no part will he find a more interesting collection of Africans. Here are Mohammedan Fulahs, pagan Jolus, Mandengas, Wolofs¹ (Jolofs), and members of countless other tribes, all talking at the top of their voices, and clothed in every variety of garment, from an English print frock to a simple loin cloth. The women are busy selling fruits and vegetables of various kinds, kola nuts, ground-nuts, and poultry, while the naked piccaninnies, like children all the world over, are playing games of apparently the most exciting description. The men to be seen in the market-place are mostly idlers who live on the labours of their wives, though amongst the crowd are scattered a certain number of warlike-looking Mohammedans from the interior, well armed with swords and knives, and riding, or leading, gaily-caparisoned little horses. At the further side of the island, and behind the European quarters, the mixed population of negroes have their dwellings—miserably squalid shanties—surrounded with rank vegetation, which cannot do otherwise than make the place unhealthy. Such is Bathurst, the capital of Gambia, the site for which, as well as a piece of land called the Ceded or English Mile, was purchased from the Mandenga chief of Kombo for a small annual tribute, and when first acquired was given the name of Leopold. Besides Bathurst there is no other town in the Colony worthy of note, and few Europeans reside anywhere but here. McCarthy's Island (Georgetown),² situated about

¹ "The Wolofs, intensely black, dwell between the Senegal and Gambia. The Mandingos, who formerly founded the powerful empire of Melli, are widely spread along the southern border of the lateau, especially near the Upper Niger."—*Heawood*.

² Purchased from the natives in 1823.

150 miles higher up the river, is an important trade depôt, without which Gambia would do little business with the interior; but its low-lying and unhealthy site renders it almost uninhabitable. "This butt-end of the habitable world," says Burton,¹ "a swamp, six miles by four, derives its name from the late Sir Charles McCarthy, whilome Governor of Sierra Leone, who, in 1823, by the mistake of his ordnance-keeper in bringing up biscuits and macaroni instead of ammunition, was beheaded by the Ashantis at the battle of Assamacow, and whose name is still sworn by on the Gold Coast."²

The natives of Bathurst itself are mostly descendants of the original settlers, Jolofs from Senegal, and the language spoken is principally Jolof or English, but the *lingua franca* of the neighbouring territory is Mandingo, and the people of the Colony and far into the surrounding interior belong to the great Mandingan race. They are avowedly Mohammedans, though amongst their number are to be found many pagans, while even among the followers of the Prophet there is no sign of fanaticism. As a people they may be described as intelligent and industrious, but at the same time they are conservative to the backbone, so much so that, in spite of every endeavour on the part of European officials to introduce improvements, they still adhere to their ancient methods of gaining a livelihood. "It is, perhaps, rather discouraging," writes Mr. Llewellyn in 1895, "to find in the present day, within a few miles of the capital town of this old-established Colony, the natives living in the same style of huts, wearing the same style of clothes, tilling the ground with the same sort of rough tools, pounding their corn, spinning their cotton, and, in fact, living in every way as they had done for

¹ *Wanderings in West Africa*, by a F.R.G.S. London, 1863.

² *Ide* Chapter V

centuries before they ever saw a European." The result of this is that, although the land is capable of producing any quantity of rice and corn (the staple food of the people), as much as a thousand tons of rice has to be imported annually to satisfy the local demands. It is only fair, however, to say that much of the land which might be cultivated with grain for home consumption is used for growing ground-nuts, which form a very valuable article of export.¹ The only other exports which can compete with ground-nuts are rubber and palm kernels, a considerable trade being also done in hides and wax.

Gambia is now in its tenth year of independence as a Crown Colony, and there can be little doubt that the improvements that have been introduced by its administrators have been great; it is with regret, however, that it must be acknowledged that commercially it has little or no outlook. Its boundaries have been fixed for all time; a rival European Power prevents any extension of its territories; and all that can be expected of the little isolated Colony is that it will continue to pay its way, at the same time inducing to the civilization of the 100,000 natives² who are willing to remain subjects of Great Britain. As a model of what a small African colony should be in the way of administration, Gambia is perhaps as good an example as can be found. The government is vested in an Administrator, assisted by an Executive Council and by a Legislative Council, consisting of four official and two unofficial members, nominated by the Crown, the principal officials being the Governor (or Administrator, as he is termed), Treasurer,

¹ Valued at about £140,000 per annum; sent chiefly to Marseilles. *Vide* Chapter XXII.

² This is a rough estimate of the population of the Colony with its protectorate; exclusive of the protectorate, the population of British Gambia on 31st December, 1896, was 13,057.

Chief Magistrate, Collector of Customs, Colonial Engineer, Surgeons, and Inspector of Police, while two Travelling Commissioners devote their time to visiting the towns and villages of the interior. The latter officials are an important institution in all West African colonies, as without them it would be impossible to keep in touch with the natives of distant parts. In Gambia the administration of these outlying districts (seventeen in number) is entrusted to native chiefs, who hold courts of justice for dealing with minor offences, and who are responsible to the Government for the peace and maintenance of good order in their districts. The system, which was only introduced some few years ago, appears to work well, and as the Travelling Commissioners hold regular Magistrates' Courts at different places, the natives have every opportunity of appealing against the awards of the native chiefs, while persons who have committed serious crimes are sent for trial to Bathurst (Supreme Court), with an appeal to the Supreme Court at Sierra Leone. Serious crimes, however, are exceptional, drunkenness and petty larceny being, perhaps, the most prevalent offences here as elsewhere on the West Coast. Occasional cases of slave-dealing occur, and on conviction are severely dealt with, for no form of slavery is recognized by the authorities, and it is hoped that in a few years even domestic slavery will be unknown in the Colony.

Much has been done of late for the welfare of the people; Bathurst has been drained and its sanitary condition greatly improved; a fine new pier on iron piles was erected in 1894 at a cost of £7000, while the creeks have been bridged, and a weekly passenger steamer for the convenience of the natives runs between Bathurst and McCarthy Island.¹

¹ Bathurst has telegraphic communication with England, as well as with the other West African ports.

Hospitals, schools,¹ and Savings Banks have also been established, and as a proof that the people thoroughly appreciate the good work that has been carried out, they readily paid the Hut Tax, of one shilling per hut, imposed for the first time in 1895.

With regard to the commercial prosperity of the Colony there is little to be said. A few improvements may be made in agriculture, and the Botanical Station at Kotu has been experimenting with Liberian coffee and other plants in the hope of introducing their cultivation, but it is doubtful if the little Colony will ever rise to greater importance in this respect. A great drawback to agriculture is the fact that for eight months of the year there falls absolutely no rain, and the total rainfall for the whole year amounts only to sixty inches.² Yet the figures annexed show that Gambia, if not advancing, is holding its own; it occasionally has a surplus³ which is carefully laid by to meet a bad year; it has no public debt, and it is able to spend considerable sums of money, as we have seen, on public works. Financially, we may, therefore, consider that the Colony is in a perfectly sound state, but at the same time it is very questionable if an isolated scrap of territory like this is worth retaining, and it has been more than once suggested that arrangements might be made with France, to exchange Gambia for some French possession nearer to one of our other Colonies.

¹ Mission schools, receiving a Government grant.

² The rainy season extends from the middle of June to the middle of October. Sixty inches is not a heavy rainfall for a tropical country; on the Equator the average is 100 inches; in some parts of Assam and Burmah over 400 inches. The rainfall of London is about 25 inches.

³ At the end of 1892 there was a surplus of nearly £20,000, invested in Government securities in England; by 1896, however, all this had been expended. The revenue is derived principally from customs and licenses. There is an export duty on ground-nuts.

STATISTICS OF THE COLONY OF GAMBIA.

Year.	Imports.	Exports.	Total Value.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£	£	£	£
1890 . .	149,548	163,374	312,922	30,573	22,758
1891 . .	172,118	180,051	352,169	31,038	27,697
1892 . .	169,973	172,197	342,170	30,977	28,739
1893 . .	166,509	240,721	407,230	31,899	38,143
1894 . .	130,349	149,143	279,492	28,798	31,640
1895 . .	97,399	93,537	190,936	20,561	28,857
1896 . .	110,324	115,981	226,305	26,172	25,301



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CHAPTER III.

PROBABLY no British possession in the world has such a reputation for unhealthiness as Sierra Leone, the "White Man's Grave"; terrible are the tales told of its baneful climate, and unfortunately there is a good foundation for its evil repute. The cemetery of Sierra Leone shows that death has been impartial in carrying off high and low,¹ but possibly the climate is no worse than that of other West Coast places, its effects having been brought home to us by reason of the proximity of the little Colony to England. On entering the harbour the eye of the new-comer cannot help being struck by the picturesque beauty of the scenery around him; the bold outline of the Lion Mountain² towering above everything, the well-wooded slopes descending to the sea-shore, the pretty little bays and inlets with which the spot abounds, all lend unspeakable charm to the scene. There is

¹ "From 1825 to 1880, the deaths of the governors averaged more than one a year; General Turner went out in February 1825, he lived only twelve months. General Campbell survived only twelve months; Colonel Denham six months; Colonel Lumley only six months after his appointment; Sir John Jeremie died of fever, four months and five days after his arrival in the Colony as Governor."—*Simpson*, 1848.

² The name was given to the place by the Portuguese from the shape of the mountain overhanging the harbour, and has been corrupted into its present form of Sierra Leone, which is a mixture of Spanish and Italian.

a tropical luxuriance in the vegetation, whose verdure stands out in relief against the deep red rocks ; there is a wealth of colour reflected from the heavens into the purple water ; yet it is all a living lie, and the town, as now situated, is nothing more than a foul death-trap, a sufficiently long residence in which leads to but one result. That this state of affairs can be partially remedied we hope to be able to convince the reader when discussing the matter of the climate of West Africa in general, and a reference to the unhealthiness of the place has been made merely to prevent a wrong impression as to the cause of the Colony's tardy development ; for it has been the climate, with the consequent frequent change of officials, which has always delayed progress.¹

Here, as at Gambia, the first settlers were the Portuguese, though it was not long before British merchant vessels discovered the excellent harbour, and established a trading-station, principally for the collection and export of slaves, on Bunce Island.² At the termination of the American War in 1783, a certain Dr. Smeathman suggested the formation of a colony in Africa for the negroes discharged from the army and navy, as well as for numbers of runaway slaves who had sought an asylum in England. The scheme received the support of such men as William Wilberforce, Clarkson, and Granville Sharp, who persuaded the British Government to purchase from the native chiefs of Sierra Leone, a plot of land, some twenty miles square, and, in 1787, about four hundred negroes and sixty Europeans³ were conveyed thither, where a town was at once founded near the site of the

¹ Officials at Sierra Leone have to serve for fifteen months before obtaining leave, whereas those at the Gold Coast are granted leave after twelve months' service.

² Plundered in 1704 by the French, and in 1721 by Roberts, the pirate.

³ "The whites were chiefly women of abandoned character, debilitated by disease."—*Murray*, 1818.

present Freetown. The colony had not been long established before it was attacked by sickness and so reduced in numbers that it was unable to resist the raids of the plundering native chiefs. The settlement was for the time abandoned, and Bunce Island became a refuge for its unfortunate inhabitants, until, in 1791, the St. George's Bay Company¹ (after receiving a Charter, under the name of the Sierra Leone Company) took the place in hand, and commenced to re-people it with parties of negroes, principally from Nova Scotia, where they had collected after the American War. Misfortune, however, again overtook the settlement, for, in 1794, it was sacked by the French,² after which the Sierra Leone Company, which had hitherto administered the government, was forced to recoup itself by selling its property to the Crown. The British Government decided to place this possession of somewhat doubtful value under the management of the African Institution—"a society formed by a large body of the most virtuous and respectable individuals in this country, with a general view to the improvement and civilization of the African continent"—and, in order to increase the population of the settlement, all slaves found on board slaving-vessels were conveyed to Freetown, where they received their liberty. The Sierra Leone Company still continued to carry on trade in the settlement, its Charter being revised in 1808, when Sierra Leone was transferred to the Crown, and again in 1821, when the forts and possessions of the late African Company on the Gold Coast were annexed to Sierra Leone.

For ninety years, therefore, Sierra Leone has been a Crown Colony, and for some considerable time it was the

¹ Promoted by Granville Sharp and his friends.

² The Governor at the time was Zachary Macaulay, father of Lord Macaulay. His name was taken by numerous freed slaves, and is now a common surname among the coloured population.

seat of the government of the whole of British West Africa, yet it requires to be a bold man to assert that, until the last decade, it was anything but an expense and an encumbrance to the mother country. From its very commencement, the nature of its inhabitants was against it. The early colonists arrived on the spot impregnated with every vice which it was possible for them to acquire from intercourse with white men ; they were provided with every necessary, and with arms and agricultural implements, which, however, they took the first opportunity of exchanging for the wherewithal to spend a few days in drunkenness and debauchery. Half of their number succumbed to disease almost at once, and the survivors were nothing better than a medium for establishing a diseased stock, which affected the population for several generations, and which was only eventually improved by the influx of freed sea-borne slaves. To understand what enormous difficulties Sierra Leone had to contend with in its infancy, the reader should bear in mind that, in addition to its ill-planned origin, the freed slaves who leavened the colony were of countless different tribes, having little in common with one another, and speaking distinct languages.¹ Never, we may truthfully say, has a British Crown Colony commenced in such an extraordinary way, and so peculiar have been its circumstances that it is impossible to compare its progress with that of any other British possession.

With the miserable past and the difficulties with which the numerous governors had to contend we need not concern ourselves further ; suffice it to say that Sierra Leone has at

¹ At one time there were said to be upwards of 150 different languages spoken in Freetown, and the Rev. Dr. S. W. Koelle, C.M.S. Missionary at Sierra Leone for six years, compiled a vocabulary of 200 languages and dialects, which was published under the title of *Polyglotta Africana*.

length shaken off the shackles, and, after ten years of careful political and financial administration, has emerged with the prospect of being able to take its place as a prosperous West African Colony. It is terribly handicapped, however, in the matter of its population, which consists almost entirely of either ultra-civilized and Christianized coloured gentlemen, or black loafers of the worst description, most of whom regard the white man as an interloper, and fit only for the grave in Kissy cemetery, which unfortunately too often forms his last resting-place. In no place is "Africa for the Africans" more closely brought home to the Englishman than in Sierra Leone,¹ where the coloured gentlemen take their place as members of council, barristers, lawyers, clergymen, and confidential clerks, while juries (even for the trial of Europeans) consist of natives, whose sense of justice is about on a par with that of the gentlemen free-boarded and lodged at such quiet retreats as Dartmoor and Portland. The fact is that Sierra Leone has been developed on the "man and brother" principle too rapidly, the consequence being an overbearing and insolent manner in the native seldom found in our other possessions. For an Englishman to speak of a Sierra Leoneite as a black man is a gross insult; to call him a nigger is actionable—with damages assessed by a coloured jury. This independence of the native results in idleness and vice,² and a disinclination to do honest work, though the inducements for emigrating to the Congo and other parts are now assisting to diminish the number of bad characters. Still, trade must suffer very considerably from this state of affairs, and it is wonderful that the Colony can show such favourable figures as the following:—

¹ i.e. Sierra Leone proper (Freetown).

² The Freetown gaol averages 500 inmates, or about 1½ per cent. of the total population. Ten per cent. of the adult population have no occupation.

Year.	Imports.	Exports.	Total Value.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£	£	£	£
1887 . .	308,038	333,517	641,555	60,637	58,334
1888 . .	250,147	339,043	589,190	63,035	63,288
1889 . .	277,781	319,719	597,500	70,836	66,771
1890 . .	389,908	349,319	739,227	73,708	63,056
1891 . .	453,378	477,656	931,034	89,869	77,965
1892 . .	413,117	420,451	833,568	86,866	83,852
1893 . .	417,466	398,664	816,130	92,769	84,690
1894 . .	470,025	426,499	896,524	98,838	93,099
1895 . .	427,337	452,604	879,941	97,851	96,690
1896 . .	494,688	449,033	943,721	104,992	116,182

Compared with other West African colonies, the commercial value of Sierra Leone is decidedly poor, but it shows a gradual improvement, and it is hoped that, now that the resources of the interior are being brought to light, this may continue. It is very doubtful, however, if any great increase in trade can ever be looked for, since there are here no vast tracts of undeveloped land, no mines or manufactures, with possibilities. What the country produces naturally is unfortunately too well known, and, if the people cannot be persuaded to turn their attention to agriculture, and the cultivation of such things as coffee and rice, then the one hope of the Colony lies in the improvement of transport, whereby the produce may be brought to the coast at less expense than hitherto. With this object, a narrow-gauge railway from Freetown to Songo Town (a distance of thirty miles) has been commenced—the pioneer railway of West Africa, and one of the few enlightened acts of which Sierra

Leone can boast.¹ The principal exports consist of palm oil and kernels, rubber, kola nuts, ginger, rice, and gum; while the imports are almost entirely restricted to cotton goods, spirits, tobacco, and hardware.

Taking a general survey of the Colony with its limits now finally settled,² we find that (including its protectorates) it comprises an area of some 30,000 square miles, with a seaboard of about 250 miles. Sierra Leone proper is a rich and fertile peninsula, twenty-six miles long by twelve miles broad, on which is situated Freetown, the original settlement, and still the capital of the Colony. The rest of the Colony is divided, for administrative purposes, into three principal districts known respectively as Western, Eastern, and Sherboro; while in the hinterland, or protectorate, five districts, each in charge of an English commissioner, have recently been established. At Sierra Leone itself is the finest harbour on the West Coast of Africa, the importance of which, as a coaling station, has now been so far acknowledged that the fortifications of the place have been improved and added to. The principal rivers which empty themselves into the Atlantic on the Sierra Leone coast are the Great or Little Scarcies, the Sierra Leone, the Rokelle, the Sherboro, the Sulimah, and the Mannah (or Mano), all of which are navigable for several miles, and furnish most valuable means of communication with the interior. These waterways are

¹ A loan of £150,000 was raised in 1895 for the railway.

² The boundary between French and British territory was fixed by an agreement made in Paris, in January, 1895, as follows:—On the north-west by the Great Scarcies River, then in a north-easterly direction until the tenth parallel is reached about midway between the eleventh and twelfth meridian west of Greenwich. Thence the boundary runs south-east to Tembi Kunda; the Mannah River, which separates Sierra Leone from Liberia, completing the limits of the colony.—Vide *An Expedition to the Source of the Niger*, by Colonel J. K. Trotter, R.A.; *Geographical Journal*, vol. x., 1897; also *The Niger Sources*, by the same Author; London, 1898.

all very similar in appearance, and a description of one will serve for almost any river on the West African coast. After leaving the trading-station at the mouth, the traveller passes through a network of creeks, hemmed in on all sides by mangroves, whose wide-spreading roots retain a great proportion of the soil and detritus washed down by the stream, so that gradually and year by year the coast-line advances; for, as the soil accumulates among the mangrove roots, these are deprived of the brackish water necessary to their support and in consequence die off, but not before a new growth has commenced seawards. The low-lying tracts, where the mangrove has ceased to live, consist of "rich vegetable alluvial mud, better suited for rice than probably any other soil in existence."¹ Above this mud zone, the stream passes through a valley, varying in width, but, whether wide or narrow, the banks are usually fringed with a dense belt of woodland, fifty to a hundred yards deep. In some places large clearings have been made, and little mud-and-grass-hutted villages crop up at intervals, but, for the most part, the vegetation is impenetrable, and the forest trees hang down over the water, until eventually the stream narrows, or some rapid or waterfall checks further progress. The scene in these upper reaches is beautiful beyond description; the branches of the trees on either bank almost interlace across the stream, while festoons of creepers and ferns hang down to within a few inches of the water; gay troupes of monkeys² chatter and

¹ Scott Elliot.

² *Jeremy Collier* (1688) gives the following amusing account of the monkeys of Sierra Leone:—"There are three sorts of apes found in this country, whereof those called Baris are taken, when they are young, to tame them and make them gentle, for they are very teachable, and after a little use and instruction they do their owners almost as much service as a slave can, for they commonly walk upright like men; they can pound millet in a mortar, fetch water from the well or river, turn the spit, and play a thousand tricks besides to make their masters merry."

leap among the boughs, and gaudy-plumaged birds are everywhere present. Anywhere but here, it would be a perfect paradise, but the Englishman being paddled up the river knows only too well that his journey is undertaken at the risk of his health; malaria lurks at every bend, and, a year hence, be he the strongest of the strong, he must either have laid his bones in Africa, or be homeward bound—a washed-out and debilitated individual.

The country away from the rivers consists of low rolling downs, with here and there a range of hills some 3000 feet in height; while, as the coast is left behind, the plateau region commences, when vast stretches of magnificent and well-watered country stand at a level of 3000 feet above the sea, and provide pasturage for the wild antelopes, and such cattle as the natives keep. The towns and villages are fairly numerous, and are all built much on the same plan, the only difference being between those of peaceful and agricultural tribes and those of the lawless and robber tribes. In the latter case, the village is usually surrounded by a loopholed mud wall, often eight feet in height, each house also being further defended by a loopholed enclosure wall, with well-planned flank defence for the entrance-gates. The materials of fortification, however, differ in different parts, the mud walls being superseded by a dense, thorny zareba, or by a carefully-prepared stockade of timber;¹ while some towns

¹ In the Mendi country (Sherboro), “the war-fences that protect the towns are rough stockades. The stakes are formed of live trees, generally thorny acacias, the lower part of the stake being kept free from foliage, while the top is allowed to sprout. These stakes are thickly interlaced with a rude lattice of long live canes, which also sprout, so that there is soon a pretty dense mass of vegetation at the top of the fence, which is, as a rule, about from fifteen to twenty feet high. The gate of the war fence is, without exception, a solid slab of hard wood, cut from the spur of a large tree, and so strong that it can never be broken in native warfare.”—*Aldridge*.

depend solely on the sweeping fire that can be brought to bear on their approaches, which are narrow and deep lanes commanded by loopholes. The houses themselves are generally circular in form, and built of mud hardened by the sun, the roof consisting of grass-thatch supported by rafters of palm fronds, which project a few feet so as to form a species of verandah. These houses or huts vary in size, the dimensions in some districts running up to thirty feet in diameter and ten or twelve feet in height. The interiors are plastered and kept scrupulously clean, and the furniture, such as it is, is, as may be imagined, of the most primitive description. As a whole, the people of the interior may be said to be law-abiding and peaceful, desiring to be left to agricultural pursuits, and requiring little beyond what their own labours can produce. There are, however, as we shall have occasion to mention, tribes whose livelihood is gained entirely by fighting, slave-raiding, and robbery, and whose disquieting presence is a constant source of trouble to the government of the Colony.

Freetown,¹ as we have said, is the correct name for the capital town (or city, as it delights to call itself) of Sierra Leone, and, as the most important place hereabouts, necessitates a somewhat particular description. Its appearance does not belie it; what strikes one about it is absolutely true; it has seen days of vast ambition, has started grand schemes, which have, however, generally collapsed. As an instance, in the centre of the town there stood, for many years, what resembled a magnificent modern ruin, in the shape of a projected public library, with reading and lecture-rooms—a memorial to Wilberforce. It was started how many years ago is hardly known, and it grew as far as the outer walls, then, all available funds having been exhausted, the

¹ 8° 30' N. Latitude, 13° 14' W. Longitude. Population about 45,000. Freetown is generally spoken of as Sierra Leone.

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shell was left roofless, until, in the course of time, sufficient money was subscribed to provide it with a temporary tin covering. For years after this the Wilberforce Memorial became a standing joke, and one of the sights of Sierra Leone; in 1887, however, the scheme was revived, and as a combined celebration of the Queen's Jubilee and the centenary of the Colony it was completed, and opened on Jubilee Day by the Governor as a public hall, available for any use—from a prayer-meeting to a ball. On the whole, however, Freetown is, for Africa, quite an imposing-looking town, with many well-built houses, though, as a rule, the effect is spoilt by the conglomeration of sheds and “go-downs” which surround them. At the waterside are the business houses and stores, for the most part plain buildings several storeys high, with windows opening on to the harbour, while the principal streets are broad and well laid out. To the uninitiated there is an unkempt look about the streets, since weeds are allowed to grow rampant everywhere, and the odours arising in all parts suggest faulty drainage. But there is apparently a reason for all this, for a Sierra Leone official writes of the streets:—“The appearance is much improved by a pathway of grass on each side, which affords a pleasing relief to the hard red earth, baked by the all-powerful sun.” The advantage of the odoriferous atmosphere is not mentioned; possibly the municipality has discovered some grand scheme for supplying the town with ozone from the Atlantic. The most important public buildings are the Fruit Market and the Cathedral, which lie side by side. The former is always interesting, not only on account of the vast accumulation of tropical fruits¹ and vegetables offered for sale, but also by

¹ Pineapples, 10*d.* a dozen; bananas, 8*d.* a head; mangoes, 3*d.* a dozen; limes, 8*d.* a hundred; guavas, 2*s.* a bushel; besides oranges, damsons, avocado pears, figs, melons, pomegranates, custard apples, and numerous inferior fruits.

reason of the great mixed concourse of African buyers and sellers. The stall-keepers are mostly of the gentler sex—dear old “mammies” in print frocks and bandana head-coverings—who haggle over the value of a pineapple as if it were a diamond or a nugget of gold. The noise is simply head-splitting, the African apparently imagining that business can only be transacted by shouting, with the accompaniment of wild gesticulations, and the lofty roof increases the din with echoes and counter-echoes. The Cathedral may be described as plain and unadorned, both within and without, the chief features being the immense amount of window (not made to open, by the way), and the many coats of yellow wash which cover the stone walls, yet the well-attended services are sufficient proof that the Church Missionary Society’s earnest labours have not been without result. From the Cathedral we pass to the public Hospital and Gaol; then to the Grammar School, situated in the old Government House, where the native learns as much as is taught in a similar establishment in England. As to the rest of the town, it consists mostly of native dwellings—a collection of ramshackle and quaint-looking huts—grouped in some measure according to the tribes to which the people belong.

The ground rises steeply through the town, and a short distance up the slope from the harbour stands Government House, on a hillock known as Fort Thornton; a little higher is the Saluting Battery, and above again are the barracks of the West India Regiment, with a sanatorium right at the top of the Lion Mountain. Besides all these buildings, there are the Government Offices, the Roman Catholic Cathedral and Convents, the Princess Christian Cottage Hospital, and innumerable churches, chapels, and places of worship,¹ while

¹ *Vide* Chapter XX.

lastly there is the famous institution known as Fourah Bay College, a description of which we shall reserve for a later chapter. Such is a general idea of the town of Sierra Leone, but the reader must remember that a cathedral or a hospital in Africa is not quite such an imposing edifice as is a similar building in England, and no British settlement in West Africa can compare in the matter of public buildings with an ordinary English country town.

The annual rainfall of Freetown averages about 150 inches,¹ and to this may be partly attributed the unhealthiness of the climate, which is doubtless not improved by the immense number of trees and swamps in and around the town. The natives, as well as the Europeans, suffer from this state of affairs, the death-rate of the coloured population being often very heavy.² The chief diseases among the natives, besides malarial fever, are dysentery, bronchitis, pneumonia, and beri-beri, while an epidemic of smallpox is by no means an uncommon occurrence.

With regard to the inhabitants of Freetown, they are, as previously mentioned, descendants of many and various tribes, though they have sunk their distinctive tribal ideas in the term "Sierra-Leone men"; some tribes, however, still retain all their native peculiarities and their separate quarters of the town. Of these, the largest colony is that known as Kroo Town, which consists of numerous streets inhabited by Kroomen, or more popularly "Krooboyes"—to the White Man invaluable, since they hire themselves out in every possible capacity, being excellent sailors,³ servants, and labourers.

¹ There are two seasons, viz. November to April dry, and May to October wet.

² It is somewhat remarkable that the number of deaths registered in Freetown each year exceeds the number of births, often by 200. This may be due to a faulty system of registration.

³ Krooboyes are to the West Coast what the Seedee-boys are to the East Coast of Africa.

They are not strictly speaking inhabitants of Sierra Leone, but birds-of-passage, either coming off or going on a job, and their sole object is to earn enough money to return to "we-country," as, in pidgin-English, they call their native land—down Liberia way. Of the Sierra Leonites pure and simple we have already said something, and, perhaps, in rather a disparaging strain, yet it is undoubtedly unfair to leave the impression that there are no black diamonds among them, for, away from home, there is probably no class of African who does better work (of a superior kind) than Sierra Leone men. In the Niger Territories, for instance, they are employed in such responsible positions as managers of trading-stations, political agents, and steamship captains, while as scripture-readers and clerks their services are ever in demand; moreover, from their ranks have been recruited a vast number of Church of England clergymen and more than one energetic Bishop.

For many years the Colony of Sierra Leone (or perhaps it would be more correct to say the British Government) was content to confine itself to the immediate neighbourhood of Freetown, but as time went on it became evident that, unless the trade of the Colony was to be allowed to be diverted elsewhere, the adjacent territories must be annexed; consequently it became the policy of the governors to increase the area of their dominion, at first by proclaiming protectorates, and then by annexation. In 1862, the district known as Sherboro passed into our hands; in 1879, Sir Samuel Rowe, hearing of the gradual approach of the French from Senegal, occupied the island of Kakonkeh, at the mouth of the Great Scarcies River; and in 1884 further extensions to the south were made, so that the whole coast-line from the Great Scarcies to the Republic of Liberia was annexed to the Colony of Sierra Leone. A coast-line alone is, however, of little value for purposes of trade, and it was necessary to

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opportunity for a special medicine-man detector, and he will be feasted with plenty to-day, and dash out the wretched woman's brains on the morrow, under the pretended discovery of marital sin. Secret cannibalism is also prevalent, though the native punishment for this custom is death, and in the Mendi Mission (an American Society) they possess the skin of a large leopard with iron claws, which had once been the property of a man, who, under this guise, satisfied his horrible craving.¹ The medicine-men themselves are frequently guilty of mysterious crimes, which they afterwards charge against innocent victims, so as to retain and increase their reputation as seers."

Mendi-land² is watered principally by the Sulimah River, whose mouth is situated 200 miles from Freetown and six miles from the Liberian frontier—the Mannah River. The Sulimah is a magnificent stream, flowing down from the country north of the British boundary, but unfortunately, owing to the presence of the Wedaro Falls, it is navigable for only twenty miles from the sea. Were it possible to circumvent the cataract, this grand waterway would open up a country rich in natural products. As it is, probably millions of tons of palm kernels are allowed each season to lie on the ground and rot, simply for want of transport to carry them down to the coast. All this will, however, doubtless be seen to as the interior policy of the Colony develops, for without the Mendi palm oil, even as now brought down, the exports of Sierra Leone would be in a very bad way.³ A great deal has been done, within the last few years, to improve communications, and every chief with whom

¹ "Human leopards," *vide* Chapter XVII.

² The authority on Mendi-land is Mr. J. T. Alldridge, Travelling Commissioner. *Vide Geographical Journal*, vol. iv., page 123.

³ Sherboro has long been known as "the milch cow of the Colony of Sierra Leone."

a treaty has been made is under an obligation to keep a certain length of roadway in thoroughly good order and repair. Yet in a land where four-footed beasts will not live roads are of little real use, except for the purpose of preparing the way for the eventual railroad; the loads which can be borne by carriers are limited in weight, and to transport a ton of kernels necessitates the employment of at least thirty carriers. A knowledge of the selling price of this commodity and a carrier's daily wage will at once show that, at a very short distance from the coast, the gathering of the fruit of the oil palm-tree as a trade ceases to be remunerative.

The country is not unlike that of the rest of West Africa—fairly level for the first hundred miles from the coast, then a gradual rise with occasional low hills, and finally a plateau of some considerable height. In parts the forests and bush by the side of the roads, or paths, are altogether impenetrable, but here and there the landscape which greets the traveller is indescribably beautiful—not vast or wide in range, but rather an example of the glorious effects produced by tropical vegetation. Similar scenes, on a miniature scale, are to be met with at Kew Gardens, but the artificial production of the gardener is but a mere travesty of nature. "This fairy-land," says Mr. Alldridge, in describing one of these beautiful spots, "consists of an avenue of palmettos, ranging in height from quite low trees up to, say, thirty feet, each tree and intervening shrub being entirely enveloped in masses of a delicate fern, which is closely allied to our favourite, the maiden-hair. It would be quite impossible for me to describe the charm that surrounds these dainty works of nature. Even my own native boys, usually quite indifferent to natural beauty, were amazed at this profusion of loveliness. Unfortunately, the most beautiful vegetation is generally associated with a swamp or a quagmire. This is particularly true of the exquisite white lilies I have frequently seen on

the silent pools of the African forest, with hundreds of their blossoms standing on stems three feet out of the water. No one but myself cared for these blossoms, but my boys found out that I valued them, and always plucked one fine head and stuck it in front of my hammock.”¹ Everywhere, where a suitable site can be found, there stands a native town or village, and the further away from the coast one travels the denser one finds the population and the larger the towns. Many of these are quite new, having been built, since British protection was extended to the country, by natives who had previously been driven from their villages, and subjected to every form of tyranny, at the hands of the lawless raiding tribes now either subdued or forced to retreat beyond our boundaries. The benefits that have accrued to the Mendis from British occupation are inestimable, and the people themselves are not slow in appreciating the new order of things. Where all before was devastation, bloodshed, and misery, there now reign peacefulness and tranquility, with a knowledge that the lives and property of the natives will be protected from the raider.

The other districts are likewise gradually receiving the advantages of British rule, and with the aid of the Frontier Police such disturbers of peace as the Sofas and the Yonnies are rapidly disappearing. The Sofas are not a distinct tribe, but are Mohammedan mercenaries, who hire out their services to any raiding chief who has sufficient money to employ them. Their very name is a terror to the pagans of the interior, and the most recent expedition undertaken against them was that which was organized at the end of 1893. It consisted of some 500 men of the West India Regiment and Frontier Police, under Colonel A. B. Ellis, C.B., and its object was to attack the Sofas at their stronghold, Kerra

¹ European travellers, away from the rivers, always travel in hammocks, borne on the heads of native carriers.

Yemma. Before, however, the enemy had been put to flight a most regrettable incident occurred. The British force was encamped on the 22nd December at Waima or Warina (Konnoh country), when just before daybreak of the following morning it was suddenly attacked. A fierce engagement ensued, the fire on both sides being heavy, and when too late it was discovered that the assailants consisted of a French force (thirty *Tirailleurs senegalais* and 1200 native allies) under Lieutenant Maritz, who, unknown to the British, were endeavouring to cut off the Sofas from French territory. Both French and English therefore imagined that they were engaging the common enemy, the Sofas, and before the mistake was found out considerable loss had been inflicted on both parties. Of the British there were killed three officers and five men, and wounded eighteen men, while Lieutenant Maritz himself died of his wounds within a few hours. The Sofas were eventually met with, and within the next month their chief, Porokerri, was killed, and the band of marauders was utterly routed.

From the foregoing a general idea can be formed of the interior districts of the Colony, which are peopled by innumerable small tribes,¹ mostly of a peaceful disposition, but hitherto much oppressed by the more powerful Mohammedan slave-raiders. A great deal has been done of late years for these inland parts, but it will take a decade or more of honest work before the natural resources of the country are thoroughly developed. Its capabilities from an agricultural point are as yet hardly known, but in this limited area there is such a choice of climate and soil, that if the energy of the people can only be aroused, the indigenous products might be supplemented in a hundred and one different ways. With the object of assisting the natives a

¹ A description of the principal of these tribes will be found in Chapter XVII.

botanic station was established in 1895, near Freetown, and by holding an agricultural exhibition every year the Government hopes "that a greater interest in agricultural pursuits will be fostered in the community, and that, in time, the natives of the hinterland will be taught a better method of cultivating, collecting, and preparing the valuable products of the country. There is no doubt that, in consequence of their present lack of knowledge, and also from want of cheap means of transport, large quantities of produce are wasted, and the commercial value of what is collected, particularly rubber, palm oil, and coffee, is very much depreciated owing to the crude manner in which it is prepared for the market."¹

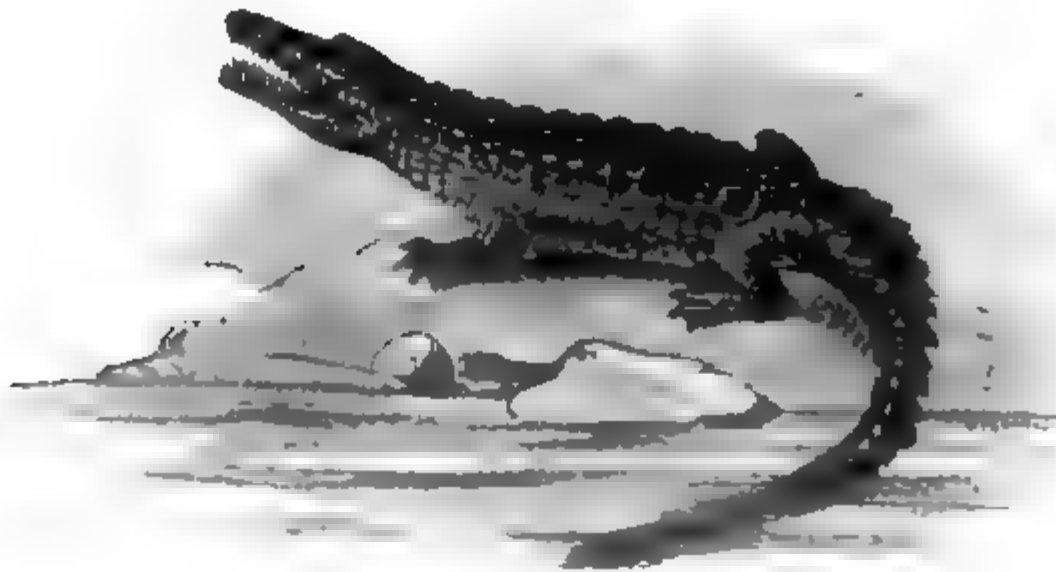
What is desired more especially is to educate the natives of the interior, for the Freetown man is not, and never can be made, an agriculturist, his sole idea of gaining an honest living (when he has any such idea) being shop-keeping and petty trading. By encouraging the cultivation of coffee, rice, arrowroot, cotton, and ginger, for all of which, besides many and various kinds of fruits, the soil and climate are admirably suited, the Government of Sierra Leone might in a few years convert the Colony into a luxuriant garden, and increase its prosperity a hundred-fold.

Before concluding this chapter it will be well to give a few details as to the present government of the Colony, and the work that it has on hand. The Government consists of a Governor, Chief Justice, Attorney-General, Solicitor-General, Master of the Supreme Court, Colonial Secretaries, Treasurers, Magistrates, Surgeons, District and Travelling Commissioners, Collector of Customs, Police Officers, &c., the Governor being aided by Executive and Legislative Councils (six official and three unofficial members). Freetown itself was, in 1895, granted municipal rights, the

¹ *Colonial Report for 1895.*

council consisting of a mayor and fifteen councillors, three of whom are appointed by the Government and the remainder by election. The garrison¹ consists of a European detachment of Royal Artillery, a native battery of West African Artillery, a detachment of Fortress Engineers, and a battalion of the West India Regiment. Besides these troops, there is a force of Frontier Police (about 500 of all ranks), quartered, as a rule, in five separate districts, and entrusted with the preservation of order among the native tribes of the interior. The revenue is derived almost entirely from import duties, there being at present no export duty, and only a small hut tax. English money is in free circulation. The principal work which is occupying the attention of the officials is the pacification and opening up of the interior, and time alone can show whether their efforts will have been in vain, or whether they will have assisted in increasing the commercial importance of the great British Empire.

¹ Annual cost about £60,000, to which the Colony does not contribute. The headquarters of the Sierra Leone Reserve Artillery are at Plymouth (England).





CHAPTER IV.

THE GOLD COAST.

TRAVELLING in a south-easterly direction along the coast, and passing the little republic of Liberia, the next British possession that we arrive at is the Gold Coast, a name whose very sound bespeaks wealth, yet, as we shall see, at the present time, as far as the precious metal is concerned, a misnomer. Like the rest of our possessions on this side of Africa it is only just emerging from a long period of inactivity, though, now that Ashanti has passed into our hands and given the Gold Coast an extensive hinterland, the Colony has a brighter future than either Gambia or Sierra Leone. Undoubtedly in the past, an immense amount of gold has been brought to Europe from this part, almost entirely in the form of dust washed from the sand of the rivers, and we have it on the best authority that, in 1551, Captain Thomas Windham, on one occasion, conveyed to England 150 pounds weight of gold-dust. Neither has this gold-dust industry ceased to exist,¹ for, even now a native can earn a living by extracting it from the river. All this, however, we shall refer to in due course, when dealing with the commercial prospects of the Colony.

¹ "Gold-dust on the Gold Coast is the money of the land; a periguin is 46 dollars, nearly £10; an ounce is £3 12s. 5d.; an ackie is half-a-crown. But the natives are so well acquainted with the precious metal, that I have seen them buy plantains with less than a farthing's worth of gold, putting one or two grains on the point of a knife."—*Winwood Reade*, 1874.

Exclusive of the newly-acquired kingdom of Ashanti the Colony comprises an area of some 50,000 square miles, with a population of about a million and a half, and is situated between 2° West and 1° 10' East of Greenwich, its most southern point being a little south of the 5th parallel N. Latitude. On the west it is bounded by the French Colony of Grand Bassam and on the east by the German Colony of Togoland,¹ while its northern boundaries are at present undefined. The capital is Accra, and the principal towns are Cape Coast Castle, Elmina, Addah (Ada), Saltpond, Quittah (Kwitta), Axim, and Dixcove—all, originally, strongly fortified trading ports, and now commercial centres with a systematic form of administration. The Government of the Gold Coast consists of a Legislative Council of six official and three unofficial members, the latter being nominated by the Governor. In addition to the Governor and his private secretary, there are the following officials:—Colonial Secretary, four Assistant Secretaries, Treasurer, Comptroller of Customs, Chief Justice, three Puisne Judges, Attorney - General, Inspector - General of Constabulary, Director of Works, medical officers and chaplains. The Government, it will thus be observed, is a somewhat elaborate one, and order is maintained by an efficient body of civil police, numbering about 500, while the Hausa Constabulary (about 1000 of all ranks) and a Volunteer Corps of 300 men, constitute the military force of the Colony. Until recently there had always been detachments of the West India Regiment stationed on the Gold Coast; their place has, however, now been taken by the Constabulary, whose

¹ By the Anglo-French agreement of 1889, and the Anglo-German agreement of 1890, the western and eastern limits of the Gold Coast were fixed by lines running almost due north from the sea, Newtown being our western point and Bé our eastern point on the coast. *I*de Chapter XXI.

discipline and training have been brought to such a state of excellence, as to make the force an invaluable addition to the army of the Empire. The men, who are recruited mostly from the Western Soudan, are armed with Martini-Henry rifles, a certain proportion of them being specially trained with field and machine guns, and their fighting qualities have had every opportunity of being tested in the numerous punitive and other expeditions which the Colony has been forced to undertake. Before, however, describing the present state of the Gold Coast, it will be well to see what its past has been, more especially as it possesses a long and not uninteresting history.

As with Gambia and Sierra Leone, so with the Grain, Ivory, Gold and Slave Coasts: to the Portuguese is due the discovery of them all,¹ and, though the death of Prince Henry the Navigator,² in 1460, checked for a while the enterprise of his countrymen, yet, ten years later, we find that Joao de Santarem and Pedro Escobar were the first to touch at the Gold Coast, obtaining such a quantity of gold at one of the towns that they named it La Mina (Elmina). From this time the Portuguese looked on the Gold Coast as their principal source of revenue, and military and naval expeditions were equipped to occupy Elmina, where, in a short time, a fort³ was built and garrisoned by Portuguese troops. The fame of the golden land soon spread abroad, and, in 1481, two English merchants (John Tintam and William Fabian) turned

¹ It is, perhaps, worthy of note that, at one time, the French laid claim to the discovery of the Gold Coast. It has, however, been clearly proved that there was no foundation for the claim, which was based on the assumption that certain French merchant adventurers of Rouen and Dieppe must have visited this part of Africa during one of their voyages in 1364.

² Grandson of John of Gaunt; he was born at Oporto in 1394.

³ Called San Jorge la Mina. Columbus once visited the spot.

their attention to the Guinea Coast;¹ but, unfortunately, their enterprise was cut short, and in a somewhat strange manner. The Portuguese king had obtained from the Pope a "bull," by which he secured for his people a monopoly of West Africa, and this being represented to Edward IV., Englishmen were prohibited from proceeding to the Guinea Coast. Thus, for a time, the Portuguese remained masters of the situation, trading, under the name of the Guinea Company, with the natives, and establishing forts and trading posts at Axim, Accra, and Shamah (at the mouth of the Prah). With the Reformation, England put aside all fear of the Papal "bull," and at once despatched an expedition (under Captain Thomas Windham)² to West Africa, the result of which was that, in 1554, a second expedition (under Captain John Lok) followed. The return of Lok with 400 pounds' weight of gold and 250 elephants' tusks aroused the cupidity of British merchants, and henceforth the search for gold became a perfect craze, though the Portuguese resented the intrusion, even by force of arms.

The French now followed the example of the English, and endeavoured to take their share of the spoils of West Africa, joining hands with the British merchants against the common foe, the Portuguese, who soon became desperate. A hundred crowns was the reward offered to the natives for the head of an Englishman or of a Frenchman, and every species of treachery was resorted to, so that it was found impossible to resist the Portuguese supremacy. The English merchants now betook themselves to the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone and Benin, avoiding for the next thirty years the intervening coast-line. In the meanwhile, the Dutch came on the scene,

¹ It is perhaps needless to say that our word *Guinea* is derived from the fact that the first guineas were coined from gold from this part of Africa.

² Windham went on to Benin, where he died. *Vide* Chapter XVI.

and from Erikson's Voyage (1595) resulted the formation of trading-stations and forts on the Gold Coast, which became eventually bases of operations in the struggles with the Portuguese. Step by step the Dutch succeeded in disputing the trade with the original discoverers of the land, and, in 1637, Elmina fell into their hands. The capture of the fort is interesting as showing that, in those days, a high officer's sense of honour was at a very low ebb. Portugal and Holland were at the time at peace, but the famous Dutch admiral, De Ruyter, who was cruising in those waters, had set his heart on the acquisition of Elmina ; accordingly, one morning he anchored his fleet off the fort, and, sending to the Portuguese governor, informed him that his sailors were afflicted with a grievous plague. There was only one hope for them, he said, and he begged to be allowed to form a sick camp on a hill above the fort. The Portuguese, with all courtesy, consented, and the Dutch forthwith established a large camp on the hill, spending several days in carrying up their sick men in hammocks. These, through dread of taking the disease, the Portuguese neglected to inspect, and, as it afterwards turned out, each hammock in reality contained a heavy piece of cannon. The scheme was a great success, and, when his plans were completed, De Ruyter struck his camp, and, without word or warning, opened fire from a score of batteries on the unfortunate Portuguese, who had no choice but to surrender. Then ensued a long series of encounters between the two rival trading powers, which ended in 1642 by Portugal ceding to Holland the whole of the Gold Coast, in return for the withdrawal of all Dutch claims to Brazil.

For 160 years the Portuguese had virtually been masters of the Gold Coast, and proofs of their occupation still remain in the language of the descendants of the people with whom they had intercourse, as well as in the names of places.¹ The

¹ It is remarkable that there are no similar remains of the Dutch



FANTI LADIES.

To face page 53.

rule of the Dutch which followed was confined only to the immediate vicinity of their forts and trading-stations, and consequently English and other European merchants gradually established trading posts at various points on the Gold Coast, but legitimate trade was almost abandoned, so profitable by the end of the sixteenth century had become the slave trade.¹ Swedes, Danes, and Brandenburgians competed with the Dutch and English in the purchase of slaves for conveyance to the West Indies and other parts, and in a very short space of time the coast-line was bristling with European forts and slave depôts. As was natural, constant bickerings occurred between the traders of the different Powers, resulting in open hostilities between the English and Dutch. Cape Coast Castle was surprised and captured by the Dutch, an event which was considered in England as an act of war. Charles II. demanded satisfaction from the States General, and, failing to obtain it, immediately despatched an expedition to seize the Dutch possession of Goree Island. Captain Robert Holmes, in the *Jersey*, proceeded to West Africa with sealed orders, forthwith captured the small island of Goree,² and after leaving a garrison in the fort, re-took Cape Coast Castle. He then sailed along the coast, and, being unexpected by the Dutch, easily defeated them and drove them from their forts. Up to this, England and Holland were nominally at peace, but

occupation, which lasted for 232 years. The English names of places are merely translations of those of the Portuguese. Vide *History of the Gold Coast*, by Colonel A. B. Ellis. London, 1893.

¹ Vide Chapter XIX.

² Goree lies opposite Dakar, to the north of the Gambia, and has a remarkable history. It was first acquired by the Dutch, in 1617, captured by the English, recaptured by the Dutch, taken by the French (1677) then again by the English, restored to the French, then changed hands six times, and now finally remains a French possession. Vide page 26.

the news of what had occurred in West Africa so incensed the Dutch that war was declared between the two nations. With the successful attack of the Dutch fleet on the English coast we need not concern ourselves ; Holland had determined at all costs to recover her possessions on the Gold Coast, and with this object De Ruyter was despatched with a powerful fleet. Goree Island surrendered to him on October 11th, 1664, and the English factories at Sierra Leone and along the coast to Elmina soon followed suit. Cape Coast Castle was next attacked, but finding it too strong, De Ruyter left it alone and contented himself with reducing all the other English factories in the neighbourhood. The Treaty of Breda (1667) established the right of England to Cape Coast Castle, while Holland was acknowledged to be rightful owner of all other places on the Gold Coast.

In spite of the Dutch monopoly, British merchants still continued to do a good trade with this part of Africa, and within a few years of the Treaty of Breda, several new English forts had been built—notably at Sekondi, Winnebah, and Accra—by the Royal African Company. Other European nations were also at this time endeavouring to oust the Dutch; the Danes had for some years been established at Christiansborg; the Brandenburgers (or Prussians), in 1682, built Fort Dorothea, at Akwidah, and in 1688 the French erected a small factory at Kommenda, but were almost at once driven away by the Dutch. No idea of unity appears to have existed among the Europeans, and they were each and all (including even the Dutch) more or less in the power of the natives, who on several occasions sacked the factories and murdered the traders.¹ This state of affairs

¹ Colonel Ellis sums up the situation of Europe on the Gold Coast in 1701 as follows:—The forts from west to east comprised Axim (Dutch); Prince's River and Akwidah (Prussian); Dixcove (English); Butri, Sekondi, Shamah, and Kommenda (Dutch); Kommenda

continued for close on a century, but the war between England and Holland, in 1780, caused the Gold Coast to be once more the scene of fierce hostilities. Mori, Cormantine, Appam, Barraku, and Kommenda were captured by the English, while the Dutch gained possession of Sekondi; though by the peace of 1784 all were restored to their original owners.

The early years of the present century were marked on the Gold Coast by various native wars, in which the Ashantis¹ were everywhere victorious, and so great was their power that diplomacy alone saved the small British garrison from annihilation. At this period commenced our ostensible authority in this quarter of Africa; for we now espoused the cause of the Fantis, and by the despatch of an embassy to Kumassi succeeded in preserving them from further aggression at the hands of their neighbours, but inveterate foes—the Ashantis. Our position on the coast having been thus strengthened, and our responsibilities in looking after the natives having increased, it was considered advisable that our possessions should receive some better form of government than that of the Chartered Company which had hitherto represented Great Britain. Consequently, in 1821, the now bankrupt African Company surrendered its charter and transferred all its forts and possessions to the Crown, Sir Charles McCarthy being appointed first Governor of the Gold Coast. The expenses incurred by his war with the Ashantis, in which he lost his life, were so great that Government decided to abandon the idea of retaining the Gold Coast as a separate Crown Colony; Cape Coast Castle and Accra were attached to Sierra Leone, while all the other

(English); Elmina (Dutch); Cape Coast (English); Mori (Dutch); Anamabo (English); Cormantine and Appam (Dutch); Winnebah and Accra (English); Accra (Dutch); and Christiansborg (Danish).

¹ *Vide* Chapter V.

forts and posts were made over to merchants, on condition that they should be properly kept up. Moreover an African Committee, consisting of three merchants and a paid secretary, resident in London, was appointed by Government, and a grant of £4000 per annum was made for the maintenance of the forts, establishment of schools, &c. On the Coast, affairs were managed by a lieutenant-governor, with a council, magistrates, and a military garrison of about 100 men. The first lieutenant-governor under the new *régime* was Mr. John Jackson, who, without taking up his appointment, was succeeded, in 1830, by Mr. George Maclean—a man of remarkable ability, whose governorship commenced with a series of successful encounters with the native tribes. In 1837, Maclean returned to England, married Miss Landon (better known as the popular authoress “L.E.L.”) and in August of the following year was once more back at Cape Coast Castle. Here, within two months, his wife died, and calumnious reports as to the cause of her death having been spread by jealous officials, Maclean’s every action was looked on with suspicion.¹ He was openly accused of fostering the slave trade, and in 1843 the Colonial Office resumed direct control over the Gold Coast, placing all the settlements under Sierra Leone.

In the following year Maclean was superseded by Commander Hill, R.N., though he continued to hold the secondary appointment of judicial assessor until his death of grief and humiliation in 1847. “He was held in such honour by the people of Cape Coast that for fourteen days all business was suspended, and the discharges of musketry, fired in accordance with native custom at the decease of a man of rank, were incessant. As the news of his death reached the chiefs of the inland towns, they despatched bodies of armed

¹ For the popular verdict on “L.E.L.’s” untimely end, *vide* Winwoode Reade’s *Story of the Ashanti Campaign*.

men to pay him this last honour, who, on arriving at Cape Coast, took up a position before the gate of the Castle and continued firing for hours.”¹ Meanwhile Commander Hill had resigned and had been succeeded by Commander Winniett, under whose administration, in 1850, Great Britain acquired from Denmark, for the sum of £10,000, the forts at Christiansborg, Ningo, Addah, and Quittah, which removed the Danes altogether from the coast. In 1852 another important change took place, the native tribes agreeing to pay a poll tax in return for British protection, and for the next ten years, although there were occasional disturbances, the Gold Coast may be considered to have been in a prosperous condition. In 1862, however, arose disputes with Ashanti, which after a short campaign in the following year, were for the time being settled, though not finally disposed of until the war of 1874.²

Until 1868 the Dutch and English forts remained intermingled, a state of affairs which created constant differences, principally on account of the Custom duties being higher in the British settlements than in those of the Dutch. Eventually, however, the two Governments came to terms, it being arranged that an exchange of forts should take place, and on the 1st January, 1868, Holland received all British possessions to the west of the Sweet River, ceding to England in return all the Dutch possessions on the east of the same river. This was not carried out without some considerable difficulties with the natives, as those who had been under British protection refused to be made over to the protection of Holland, and in more than one case the Dutch were forced to employ their men-of-war to occupy their new possessions. The arrangement never prospered; the natives would have nothing to say to it, and the Gold Coast for the

next few years was thrown into a wretched state of turmoil and inter-tribal warfare which crippled all trade. This continued until 1872, when the Dutch finally made over all their possessions to England, which, as we shall show in the next chapter, led to the war with Ashanti and the downfall of King Kwoffi Kari-Kari.¹ At the conclusion of this war, the Gold Coast and Lagos were separated from the government of Sierra Leone, to commence a new era as the Gold Coast Colony, and in 1886 Lagos was proclaimed a separate colony, since which time the Gold Coast has had to rely on its own resources.

Looking at the past history of the Colony, as set forth in the above sketch, it seems wonderful that any commercial progress should have been made at all, for since British traders first set foot in the land, 400 years ago, hardly a year of perfect peace has passed. Ashanti undoubtedly has been the curse of the Gold Coast, and had stronger measures been taken thirty-five years ago, England might now be richer by many millions sterling, and this West African colony might be at the present moment what it must eventually prove to be—a jewel in the Imperial Crown. The incubus was removed by the last Ashanti expedition, and the treasures that have been locked up for centuries will now doubtless be forthcoming to reward the nation which, in spite of all opposition, has steadfastly clung to its possessions.

We have traced the development of the Gold Coast up to the time when it became a separate Crown Colony, and it will now be interesting to see how, as such, it has acquitted itself. Its value can be best understood by a glance at the figures in the annual Blue-books for the past ten years, and it must be remembered that the following comparative table

¹ Commonly called *Coffee Kal-Kali*.

refers to the Colony before it had acquired the important hinterland which has recently been added to it, and which cannot fail to increase its trade very considerably :—

GOLD COAST COLONY—1887-1896.

Year.	Imports.	Exports.	Total value.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£	£	£	£
1887 . .	363,716	372,446	736,162	122,350	139,443
1888 . .	432,112	381,619	813,731	97,807	133,468
1889 . .	440,868	415,926	856,794	111,388	125,003
1890 . .	562,107	601,348	1,163,455	156,449	117,899
1891 . .	665,781	684,305	1,350,086	186,022	133,407
1892 . .	597,095	665,064	1,262,159	183,075	158,104
1893 . .	718,353	722,107	1,440,460	201,783	178,935
1894 . .	812,830	850,343	1,663,173	218,261	226,931
1895 . .	931,537	877,804	1,809,341	230,076	265,289
1896 . .	778,009	792,111	1,570,120	237,460	282,278

The above figures speak for themselves, and no one can deny that a colony which, under the most adverse circumstances, can more than double its trade in ten years is worth possessing. It is difficult for many reasons, to compare this decade with any period of the past, as the records are incomplete, and the old “floating-trade” system¹ made annual returns an impossibility; still, here and there we get some figures relating to the trade of the Gold Coast half a century or so ago which are worthy of study. Thus, in 1829, the exports from the Gold Coast (exclusive of gold) into Great

¹ A ship was fitted out in England, and remained on the West Coast of Africa until all her cargo had been bartered with the natives.

Britain were valued at £11,790, and the imports into the Gold Coast from Great Britain at £88,259, the enormous difference being accounted for by the fact that neither gold nor slaves entered into the calculations. Again, we learn that the exports from Cape Coast Castle for the five years ending June, 1834, amounted to a total value of £633,981 (inclusive of gold), or an average of about £125,000 per annum, but here again there is no mention of the value of the export of slaves, which must then have been very considerable.

As regards gold—that precious metal which was the cause of the early importance of the Colony, and with which, in name at any rate, it will ever remain associated—there can be no two opinions that it abounds in the country,¹ but, for one reason or another, it has not been forthcoming in the enormous quantities at first anticipated. The rivers that flow down to the Gulf of Guinea have, each and all, a vast store of grains of gold mixed with their sands, and where gold is found in this form, there must be a land somewhere in the river's course in which the metal lies hidden, and needs but to be found. Bosman, who wrote very fully of the Gold Coast, mentions several districts in which, in his time, gold was, according to native report, abundant in the shape of nuggets, and all the streams and rivers contained gold dust. Swanzy (1816) estimated the annual export of gold from the Colony at 100,000 ounces; McQueen (1821) said £3,406,275; while Martin tells us that Great Britain received from the whole of West Africa in the three years ending 1834, gold to the value of about £250,000. The following table shows the annual export of gold-dust and nuggets from the Colony for the past few years:—

¹ *To the Gold Coast for Gold*, by R. F. Burton and V. L. Cameron; 1883.

Year.	Weight.	Value.
	ozs.	£
1886 . .	20,799	74,828
1887 . .	22,547	81,168
1888 . .	24,031	86,510
1889 . .	28,667	103,200
1890 . .	25,460	91,657
1891 . .	24,475	88,112
1892 . .	27,446	98,806
1893 . .	21,972	79,099
1894 . .	21,332	76,796
1895 . .	25,416	91,498

It will thus be observed that, with the exception of the year 1889, there has been little fluctuation in the annual output of gold; if anything it shows signs of a slight decrease, though this may have resulted from various causes. Mr. Hodgson (Colonial Secretary of the Gold Coast), writing in 1892, says, "The country is rich in gold; it is to be found everywhere in large or small quantities, and there is no native family in the country without its family gold ornaments of the purest gold and often of artistic workmanship." Another writer,¹ in the same year, thus describes the native method of mining:—"A native miner has but few implements—a long-bladed spud or digger, a wooden bucket for baling out the water or hoisting up the stuff, and a bowl for washing or "vanning" make up the list. He rarely makes his shaft more than three feet in diameter. Planting one end of his digger into a recess in the shaft, he places the other end

¹ Mr. G. E. Ferguson, a most worthy native official.

diagonally against the opposite side of the shaft, and, supporting himself by it, his foot is placed in another of the recesses. He then lengthens out his body, and fixes his back firmly against the side of the shaft. Thus supported, he removes the digger, plants it into another recess below the first, and, by repeating the operation, gets to the bottom of the shaft. A tunnel, which cannot be long, for his neighbour's shaft is only fifteen to twenty feet from him, is next driven. In some cases there is a quick return, nuggets worth £100 not being rare, as I was informed by the Chief of Asiakwa. From all I could learn the yield is about £2 10s. per ton. Whatever the yield may be, the numerous shafts serve as catchpits for surface water, and as the rainy season sets in all the workings are suspended; a few are renewed during the dry season,¹ while most of them are permanently deserted, and new shafts sunk. In this way the Akim miner honeycombs the ground, and by interfering with the natural distribution of the water wastes the mineral resources of his country."

English companies have been hard at work for some few years now, endeavouring to develop the mining industry (principally in the neighbourhood of Axim), but the cost of machinery and transport, as well as the evil influences of the climate, makes progress slow, though the Gold Coast enthusiasts are not without the hope that the day is not far distant when the mines will yield a very remunerative return.² Were the climate more healthy, probably there

¹ The seasons here are different to those at Sierra Leone, viz. July to September and December to March dry, the remaining months wet.

² In 1897, the *Wassau Gold Coast Mining Company* declared a dividend of five per cent., and it was stated at the general meeting that it was the first occasion on which a gold company connected with the Gold Coast had ever been able to recommend the payment of a dividend.

would have long since been a rush to the West African gold-fields, but, as matters are, the only Europeans¹ at the mines (about twenty-five) are the managers and superintendents of the various companies, who are unable to remain long enough at their posts to see any good result from their labours. Whether gold-mining will ever be really successful remains to be proved ; one good has, however, apparently come of the operations, as a more thorough examination of the soil has led to the recent discovery of petroleum springs in the Apollonia district, from which excellent samples of crude oil have been extracted. The situation of these springs—within two miles of the sea-shore—makes them likely to become a valuable source of revenue, and it may be that petroleum, found on the spot, will solve the great difficulties of transport, which has always been, and still is, the acknowledged drawback to the rapid development of the Gold Coast interior.

Gold, perhaps fortunately, is not the product on which the Colony pins its faith, for, like the rest of West Africa, the principal exports are palm kernels, palm oil, and rubber, all of which have increased by leaps and bounds of late years, while among the other exports which may be mentioned are camwood, cocoa-nuts, coffee, copra, cotton, ground-nuts, grain, gum copal, hides and skins, ivory, kola nuts, and timber. Without the produce of the oil palm-tree and rubber, it is doubtful if any West African colony would pay its way ; the natives of the Gold Coast so far have not learnt to do more than gather the natural products of the land, though every endeavour is now being made to induce them to cultivate the soil and grow crops, which may help to maintain the prosperity of the Colony, when the days of palm oil are on the wane. We have already remarked on the

¹ The native miners employed by English companies number on an average between 2500 and 3000.

increasing value of Gold Coast trade, and it may be interesting to mention how this increase is mainly accounted for. Comparing the years 1886 and 1894, we find that the total value of exports had increased by nearly £500,000; now of this increase rubber and palm oil made up about £300,000, timber £65,000, and skins¹ £45,000, so that virtually the Gold Coast Colony stands or falls on palm oil and rubber. The officials are fully aware of this dangerous state of affairs, and are now endeavouring to render the Colony "independent of the state of any single market, by broadening the basis of trade by the introduction of foreign products and the exportation of native growths."²

Vast are the improvements which have taken place in the Colony during the past four years, not only in commerce, but also in the comfort and well-being of the natives. The principal towns have now clean streets and good drainage, where all before was filth and a disgrace to civilization; reservoirs supply the people with unpolluted water; government hospitals and free dispensaries are to be found at all the coast towns; while telegraph lines have been laid throughout the Colony, and an excellent postal system has been established. The education³ of the native has not been forgotten, and, in addition to the government schools, there are numerous educational establishments under missionary societies,⁴ which receive grants from the funds of the Colony. For the encouragement of thrift, savings-banks have been opened at various places, but the natives of the Gold Coast do not appear to take kindly to them, the reason for which is accounted for by the fact that any small savings are imme-

¹ Chiefly monkey skins (*Colobus vellerosus*), the average export of which was until recently about 180,000 per annum. The monkeys are now, however, becoming scarce.

² *Colonial Reports*.

³ An Education Act was passed in 1887.

⁴ *I*vide Chapter XX.

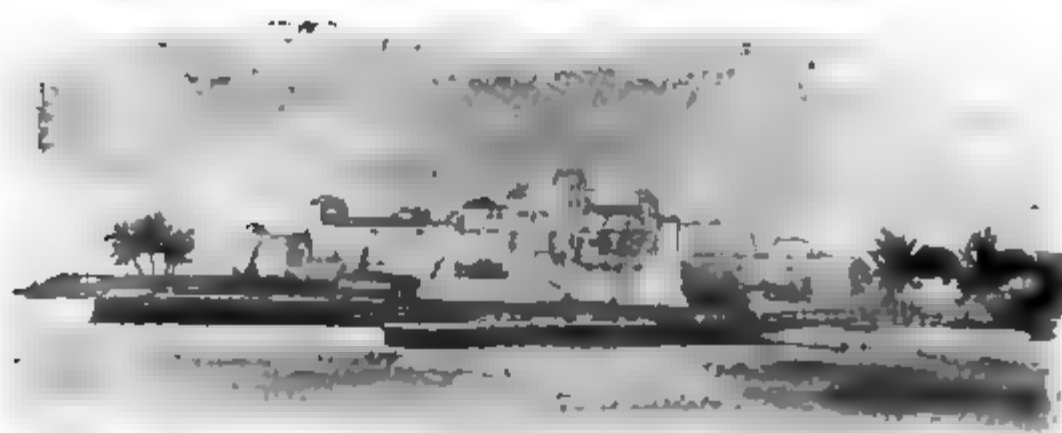
diately converted into commodities of saleable value for petty trading with the people of the more inland parts.

The Gold Coast, unlike most West African colonies, possesses more than one town of European residence and importance; Gambia has only Bathurst, Sierra Leone Freetown, and Lagos the town of the same name, whereas here we find, besides the capital Accra, several rival ports, the principal of which are Cape Coast Castle, Elmina, Addah, Saltpond, and Quitta,¹ yet, strange to say, nowhere along the whole surf-beaten coast is there a single harbour, and, furthermore, there is no spot where it would be possible, even for modern engineering skill, to make one. Accra,² the seat of government, comprises the old English, Dutch, and Danish castles (or forts) of James Fort, Crèvecoeur, and Christiansborg, and is now the most thriving place on the coast, with a population of about 17,000. Earthquakes and fire, by removing the conglomeration of buildings and native huts, have done much for the town, which is now laid out with a certain amount of regularity and in wide streets; public buildings are each year being erected, and it is hoped that before long Accra will be a model West African town. There is, however, little worth recording about any of the Gold Coast towns, though when viewed from the sea there is certainly something of grandeur and picturesqueness about them all. The forts are decidedly imposing, and the large white houses and stores of the Europeans stand out as a mark of civilization among the squalid native huts. On closer inspection, however, the forts prove to be dilapidated, and the palatial residences of the Europeans to be built among

¹ The following is a tolerably complete list of the trading stations on the Gold Coast from West to East:—Apollonia, Axim, Aquidah, Dixcove, Butri, Tacorady, Sekondi, Shamah, Kommenda, Elmina, Cape Coast Castle, Nassau, Anamabo, Cormantine, Apam, Winnebuh, Accra, Tassy, Prampram, Ningo, Addah, and Quitta.

² The rainfall at Accra is the lowest on the coast, viz., thirty inches.

the most sordid surroundings. Elmina is, perhaps, the most imposing-looking place, its white forts and houses showing up in bold relief, and contrasting in no small degree with its near neighbour, Cape Coast Castle, where everything is tinged with the brick-red colour of the soil. The general appearance of all the coast towns is very similar—an old fort, a few houses inhabited by officials and traders, a mass of native dwellings, steamy heat, and a superabundance of malaria-producing vegetation. They have all passed through trying times, and are only now beginning to hold up their heads, and to burst forth into public buildings and other signs of British occupation. The country beyond the town calls for little remark; there is no striking difference between it and the West Coast of Africa generally, though, perhaps, the forest belt is denser and more extensive than in the countries further west. That the Colony has a great future before it now that the peace of the hinterland has been assured must be apparent to everyone, for, as we shall show in the next chapter, the one great thorn in the flesh of the Gold Coast has, from its earliest days, been the kingdom of Ashanti.



ELMINA FORT.



CHAPTER V.

ASHANTI.

BOSMAN, in his *Description of Guinea*,¹ mentions the inland kingdom of Asiante, as one known to be of considerable importance, but having no intercourse with the coast; and it is not until the close of the seventeenth century that we hear of the Ashanti nation asserting itself. At that time the kingdom of Denkera was all-powerful on the Gold Coast; all the neighbouring tribes had been conquered by Bosiante, the Denkera king, who now commenced to turn his attention to Osai Tutu, the king of Ashanti, his great rival in the interior. Bosiante wished to pick a quarrel with Ashanti, and, in accordance with native custom under the circumstances, sent a friendly embassy of a certain number of his wives to Osai Tutu, hoping that the latter would give him the opportunity of having to avenge their honour. Osai Tutu, however, saw through the device, and returned the compliment with the same intention, the result being that Bosiante was caught in his own trap, and Ashanti declared war on Denkera. The people of Denkera were unprepared for war on a large scale, and the secret designs of the king were unknown to them, but before hostilities broke out there was ample time for preparation, and Ashanti laid in a stock of munitions of war. In this interval Bosiante died, and his successor endeavoured

¹ *A New and Accurate Description of the Coasts of Guinea, etc.*, by William Bosman; translated from the Dutch, second edition, 1721. Bosman was chief factor for the Dutch at Elmina.

to patch up a peace with Osai Tutu, who, however, seeing an opportunity for a magnificent conquest, refused to treat; thus, in 1701, he descended on Denkera and utterly routed his enemies. Now, the Denkeras had been in alliance with the Dutch at Elmina, to whom they supplied slaves for the over-sea slave-trade, consequently, when they were threatened by Ashanti, the Dutch assisted them with some guns and trained gunners. The guns fell into the hands of the Ashantis, and amongst the loot there was also a promissory note, by which the king of Denkera was to be paid a monthly rent for the ground on which the Dutch forts stood. Osai Tutu having conquered Denkera, claimed payment of the monthly rent from the Dutch, who accordingly paid it to him regularly; a fact which, as we shall see, became, later on, somewhat of importance to England.

The Ashantis now took the place of the Denkeras as the paramount native state in the neighbourhood of the Gold Coast, reducing all the minor tribes, and overcoming the more powerful Akims and Assins. Osai Tutu lost his life, however, in the war with the Akims¹ (about 1713), and was succeeded by his brother, Osai Apoko, who captured from the Akims further promissory notes relating to the ground-rents of the English, Dutch, and Danish forts at Accra and Christiansborg. Osai Apoko continued his conquests, but his progress was somewhat checked by the rebellion of his chiefs, whose suppression took several years, and his successor, Osai Akwasi (his brother), came to the stool with many important matters to face. It was in his reign that the first struggles between Ashanti and Dahomey occurred, though little result came from them, and his death, in 1752, left

¹ At the town of Akromanti, which was afterwards sacked and burned. "To commemorate the death of their king, the oath *Akromanti Memereda* (Akromanti Saturday) was established by law as one of the most sacred oaths of Ashanti." *Ellis*.

Ashanti steeped in war with numerous tribes. The reign of Osai Kwadjo (nephew of the three former kings) was one of continuous warfare. The minor tribes of Gaman, Denkera, Tshiforo, and Wassaw formed an alliance against the common foe, and, with the assistance of Mohammedan musketeers from Kong, succeeded in twice defeating the Ashantis, though on the third occasion Osai Kwadjo gained a decisive victory, and carried off thousands of his enemies as prisoners. Dahomey, fearing invasion, had, meanwhile, entered into friendly relations with Ashanti, and the latter, eager for fresh conquests, commenced to threaten the Fantis of the coast regions. Fresh rebellions in other directions, however, warded off for a time the danger to the European settlements on the Gold Coast, and Osai Kwadjo's death in 1781 gave a certain period of rest. The breathing space, however, was not of long duration, for the new king, Osai Kwamina, was no less a warrior than his predecessors,¹ and the early years of his reign strengthened the position of Ashanti to such an extent that the Danes at Christiansborg sought his alliance, and the name of Ashanti became a terror to everyone on the Gold Coast.

Fortunately, internal troubles again kept Ashanti quiet for awhile. Osai Kwamina was deposed in 1797, but no sooner had his brother, Osai Apoko II., succeeded to the stool than war broke out again—this time with the Mohammedans of Kong, who were defeated and enslaved. Apoko II. reigned only two years, and on his death his brother, Tutu Kwamina, carried on the war with the Mohammedans, adding a considerable amount of territory to the rapidly-increasing Ashanti kingdom. The conquests made by Ashanti in these latter years of the eighteenth century were indeed extra-

¹ "It was made a law that no king should receive the honours of a royal burial unless he had himself conducted a campaign." *Winwoode Reade*.

ordinary; yet their methods were certainly faulty; they were undoubtedly a bold and warlike nation, but they made no effort (beyond requiring tribute) to hold the countries that they conquered; consequently, no sooner were their backs turned than rebellion broke out in the countries which they had subjugated.

Such was the early history of the growth of Ashanti, a kingdom which has been to England, within the present century, the cause of much trouble and of the loss of many valuable lives, the reason for which undoubtedly lies in the fact that the Ashantis have been, for many centuries, the most civilized natives on the West Coast of Africa, and, consequently, the hardest nut that we have had to crack. To begin with, an Ashanti army meant the entire Ashanti nation,¹ for every male had to fight, were he ever so peacefully

¹ "There was no standing army; the nation itself was the army, and the king its commander-in-chief. As soon as war was proclaimed every man took up his firelock, tied his cartouche-box round his waist, put some corn-meal and kola-nuts into his bag, and joined his company under the chief or captain to whom he belonged. As soon as the army had marched, the women, stripping themselves naked, or wearing the clothes of their husbands, daubed their bodies with white clay, marched in procession through the streets beating a drum and any man who had ventured to remain behind. The army was accompanied by corps of carpenters, blacksmiths, and other artisans; by sutlers, selling provisions; by money-lenders, advancing gold-dust at ten per cent. a month; by women, who carried pots, calabashes, and other cooking utensils. In battle these women stood behind their husbands, supplying them with powder, and animating them with songs. The advance skirmishers were slaves; the secondary captains fought in the front; the king and his generals remained in the rear, seated on their stools beneath red umbrellas. They were surrounded by their young men, who cut down those who attempted to retreat. It was the fashion for the commander-in-chief to play at some kind of game during the battle, as if to show that he was confident of victory; and in case of defeat it was the custom for the chiefs and captains to commit suicide. Seated on barrels of powder they blew themselves up into the air; according to the Ashanti proverb, 'It is shame which causes the chief to die.'"—*Winwoode Reade*.



CAPE COAST.

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN.

inclined, and as their war-song said: "If I go on I shall die; if I stay behind I shall be killed; it is better to go on." Therefore they chose the lesser evil. Again, their frequent conquests had made them, by the beginning of the present century, so confident, that they considered themselves to be invincible; while their intercourse with the coast, and the wealth which they had acquired by successful wars, had enabled them to become possessed of a plentiful supply of firearms. Neither were they deficient in military training; their generals had gained from experience a certain knowledge of the art of savage warfare, and the men were sufficiently trained to carry out a successful attack, or to make an orderly retirement before a superior enemy. Moreover, the very nature of their country had made them expert skirmishers and adepts at bush-fighting. So powerful had they become by 1816, that they had besieged the forts of Annamabo and Cape Coast Castle (receiving indemnities from the English Governors), and were masters of the whole coast from Assinie to the Volta. This state of affairs was found to be most disastrous to British trade, and the Royal African Company determined to endeavour to come to terms with the king of Ashanti. With this object, in 1817, a mission was sent to Kumassi, where its members remained for some considerable time, without, however, effecting anything more than the signature of a valueless treaty. The story of the mission and its reception has been told by Mr. Bowditch, and as a description of the Ashanti nation in the zenith of its power, is both interesting and valuable.

Sydney Smith, who reviewed Bowditch's book¹ in the *Edinburgh Review*, compared portions of it to chapters of the "Arabian Nights," and if Kumassi was in reality what Bowditch described it to be, its wealth must have been something

¹ *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*, by T. Edward Bowditch, London, 1819.

extraordinary. Every native in the town appears to have been laden with gold jewelry, and, at the reception of the mission, "the sun was reflected, with a glare scarcely more supportable than the heat, from the massive gold ornaments which glistened in every direction." The king sat on a golden throne; his breast-plate, sword-hilt, and anklets were of solid gold; his guards wore belts, and his band played instruments of the same metal; while even the meanest of his attendants was adorned with layers of fine gold chains. But this was not all, for all the important personages were bedecked with strings of aggry beads,¹ whose value far exceeded their weight in gold. The mystery of these beads has never been solved; they are the diamonds of the Gold Coast, and the most cunning of European alchemists have failed to imitate them; whether they are stones or glass mosaics is a disputed point, and the only reliable information about them is that they are found in the ground, at some distance from the sea, in Liberia and the western half of the Gold Coast. They were noticed by the earliest European travellers, and the natives themselves say that they have been known in the country from time immemorial. The most popular belief is that they are of Egyptian or Phœnician manufacture, and that they originally found their way into the country, across the continent from the north; but no one has, so far, been able to account for the fact that similar beads are not forthcoming in other parts of Africa equally accessible to Egyptian or Phœnician trade.

Anyone who reads Bowditch and compares Kumassi as he described it in 1817 with Kumassi of to-day, cannot fail to be struck with the rapidity of the decline of Ashanti; what, he

¹ "The plain aggry beads," says Bowditch, "are blue, yellow, green, and a dull red; the variegated consist of every colour and shade." He also states that, if a bead is broken in a scuffle, the Ashanti law requires the owner to be paid seven slaves.

will ask, has become of the vast store of gold and aggrы beads? Kumassi, when captured in 1874 and 1896, showed no signs of immense wealth; in fact, on both occasions, the loot was of little account; though, of course, there was ample time for everything of value to be removed.¹ Yet, without questioning Bowditch's veracity, it seems remarkable that a kingdom almost weighed down with gold should, within sixty years—and all prosperous and victorious years—have suddenly lost everything. Perhaps, as time goes on and the country settles down, the earth will render up, with aggrы beads, the hidden treasures of the past half-century.

Bowditch's mission was practically a failure, though, doubtless, as a result of it, a Resident or Consul (Mr. Dupuis) was appointed to Kumassi. Dupuis made a second treaty with the king, who gave many promises which he failed to fulfil, and so matters continued until, in 1821, the Royal African Company ceased to exist.² The Gold Coast forts now came under the direct control of the Governor-in-Chief of the West Coast of Africa, who, at the time, was Sir Charles McCarthy, a man of most remarkable ability and courage. McCarthy at once repudiated the treaty of Dupuis, espoused the cause of the Fantis, and decided to wage war on their oppressors, the Ashantis. The force available consisted of the Royal African Colonial Corps,³ a detachment of a West India Regiment, the Cape Coast Militia, and numerous undisciplined native allies, and with this motley array it was determined to invade Ashanti. It is, of course, easy to be wise after the event, but it seems incredible that a man of McCarthy's forethought

¹ Captain Boisragon, who visited Kumassi in 1892, says:—"The king alone was a sight to see, being a mass of gold from a kind of fireman's helmet he had on to the tips of his sandals, which alone must have been worth some hundreds of pounds."

² *Vide* Chapter IV.

³ Long since disbanded. It was recruited from the bad characters of the British army, supplemented by natives.

should have acted as he did. His troops were few enough in all conscience, yet he added to his weakness by detaching three columns to act from separated bases, while he, himself, with one of them, knocked his head against the main Ashanti army. The result was what one might expect; the native allies gave way at the commencement of the battle,¹ the British force fought back to back until their last charge of powder was expended, and the officers, to a man, including Sir Charles himself, were cut up. Never was a more fool-hardy expedition launched, and the fate which overtook it gave the final *coup* to the Ashanti dream of invincibility. They had completely subdued all the neighbouring native tribes, and now they had utterly routed the army of the great white chief, whom they had hitherto considered almost invulnerable. McCarthy's head was cut off, carefully embalmed, and kept at Kumassi, where, for many years, it was carried through the streets at the principal festivals.² His heart, it was said, was eaten by the Ashanti generals, who, in accordance with a very prevalent savage belief, imagined that they would thus acquire the courage of the bravest man they had ever encountered in battle. By the Fantis, for whom the General had sacrificed himself, his name has even to this day been preserved, not only in their songs and in the names of their children, but also in "their most sacred oath, 'By Wednesday and McCarthy!'"

That Cape Coast Castle escaped destruction was only due to the fact that the Ashanti army, while besieging it, was decimated by smallpox and dysentery, and forced to abandon

¹ Assamacow.

² "Amongst the war trophies taken from Prempeh's palace was a white man's skull. It was covered with writing in Arabic characters, and was by some supposed to be the cranium of Governor McCarthy. Common repute, however, had it that the Governor's skull had been mounted with gold, and turned into a drinking-cup."—Bennett Burleigh's *Two Campaigns*, 1896.

the enterprise. But, two years later, the king planned an attack on Accra, which resulted in the first victory gained by British arms over the Ashantis. The battle was fought near the village of Dodewah, and for some time it was a matter of speculation as to how it would terminate. The native allies fled, and the Ashanti hosts came on in overwhelming force, when Colonel Purdon saved the day by opening a brisk fire of rockets on the enemy, who saw this new form of missile falling in their midst with such consternation that they fled from the field, leaving the flower of their army killed or wounded.¹ This blow to the Ashanti power was felt far and wide, for although no actual treaty of peace was made between Great Britain and Ashanti for several years, the latter kingdom was so crippled that it refrained from continuing its old aggressive actions.

In 1831 was signed the Tripartite Treaty by which Ashanti gave up all claim to Denkera, Assin, and other countries, receiving in return a guarantee of free access to the coast for trading purposes. This treaty was made by Governor Maclean, and was known to the Ashantis as "Maclean's Treaty." Though ratified by the Government, it was of little value, as, from the beginning, no attempt was made on our part to carry out its terms; the trade-routes were not protected in any way, and Ashanti traders were frequently robbed by the tribes through whose countries they passed to bring their gold-dust to the coast. Small wonder, therefore, that the Ashantis took the law into their own hands, and, in 1853, invaded Assin. They were met by Governor Hill, with a British force, and driven off, but they retired only to form fresh plans, their one idea now being to reconquer the countries which they had given up in 1831, and to drive the English away from the territory that intervened between

¹ *Narrative of the Ashantee War*, by Major Ricketts, Royal African Corps, 1833.

them and Elmina, which at that time belonged to the Dutch. Nothing, however, was done for ten years, when Governor Pine suddenly found himself obliged to take up arms to protect the Fantis from an Ashanti invasion. The *casus belli* was, perhaps, trivial: two natives had run away from Ashanti and claimed British protection; the king demanded from the Governor that they should be sent back, threatening, in default, to invade Fanti territory. Governor Pine refused to accede to the demand, and immediately wrote home begging for Imperial aid, which, it is needless to say, was refused: still, his despatch to the Duke of Newcastle is interesting, as showing that, thirty-four years ago, there was a man who had sufficient foresight to grasp the whole situation,¹ and who, had he been backed up, would in all probability have effected what it has taken a quarter of a century and two British expeditions to carry out. The despatch in question ran as follows:—

“It is with the deepest regret that I find myself involved, in spite of all my precautions, in a serious and, I fear, lingering war; but such being the case, I will not conceal from your Grace the earnest desire that I entertain that a final blow shall be struck at Ashantee power, and the question set to rest for ever as to whether an arbitrary, cruel, and sanguinary monarch shall be for ever permitted to insult the British flag and outrage the laws of civilization.

“This desirable object can be attained only by the possession of such a force as I fear the Governor of these settlements can never hope to command, unless your Grace should

¹ Governor Hill, after defeating the Ashantis in 1853, although he did not actually advocate immediate action, wrote to the Colonial Office as follows: “If it were not for the expense, and exposure of the few white officers in this deadly climate, a contest with Ashanti and the destruction of that Power would be a war of humanity and civilization.”

be pleased to urge upon Her Majesty's Government the policy, the economy, and even the mercy of transporting to these shores an army of such strength as would, combined with the allied native forces, enable us to march on Coomassie, and there plant the British flag.

"To a stranger the course I point out may appear a visionary one ; but I am convinced that, even with all the disadvantages of climate, the expedition would not be so dangerous, so fatal, or accompanied with such loss of life as have attended other expeditions in other and apparently more genial climes ; and with 2000 disciplined soldiers, followed by upwards of 50,000 native forces, who require only to be led and inspired by the presence of organized troops, I would undertake (driving the Ashantee hordes before me) to march to Coomassie."

This earnest appeal met with no response ; West Africa was in ill-odour with the Government, and the idea of despatching an expedition from England to gratify the expanding policy of a minor colonial governor could not be for a moment entertained. But this rebuff did not deter Governor Pine ; he knew full well that peace for the Gold Coast could only be obtained by the conquest of Ashanti, and he determined forthwith to attack the enemy with the native troops at his command. At first all went well, and the Ashantis retired before the small British force, which established a camp at Prahsu. Here, however, they were forced to remain inactive for several weeks, when disease unfortunately attacked the troops, and the enterprise had to be abandoned. The result was greatly to be deplored, since the Ashantis regarded the hasty withdrawal of the British troops as equivalent to a rout. The matter created no small stir at home, and, when too late, the Government repented somewhat of its short-sighted policy, though all that happened was the appointment of a Commission to inquire

into West African affairs. The report eventually made by the Commission is a proof of the way in which West Africa at that time was treated; it was strongly urged that it was inadvisable to annex any more territory in West Africa, and that such possessions as were already in the hands of Great Britain should be transferred to the natives as soon as they should be considered capable of undertaking the government of their own country. Greater want of foresight has probably never been displayed, and one of the surviving Commissioners has quite recently stated publicly that he and his colleagues had taken a most erroneous view of the state of affairs on the Coast. It is, perhaps, not too much to say that, but for this Commission, we might now be almost without European rivals in West Africa.

The unfortunate ending to Governor Pine's expedition left matters much as they were before, and the Ashantis, naturally supposing that they had been victorious, refused to treat with the English except on their own terms. No treaty of peace was therefore concluded, and, although each party remained watching the other, open hostilities did not break out until the end of 1872. The causes which led to this new war were so peculiar that to explain them fully it is necessary to recall certain events in the history of the Gold Coast which were touched on generally in the last chapter.¹ It will be remembered that in 1850 Great Britain bought up the Danish forts on the Gold Coast, from which time she shared with Holland the complete control of the coast. The situation of the Dutch and British forts was, however, found to be most inconvenient, and in 1868 an exchange was effected, by which each power consolidated its possessions. This arrangement (which, from a European point of view, was most satisfactory) gave rise to considerable trouble with the natives, who disliked being handed over from one Power to the other

¹ *Vide* page 57 *et seq.*

without their consent being asked. The principal tribes who stirred up the strife were the Fantis, Ashantis, and Elminas. The Ashantis and Fantis, as we have seen, were always at daggers drawn, and in this instance the Elminas were dragged into the quarrel by the Fantis, who asked them to form an alliance against Ashanti. The refusal of the Elminas so incensed the Fantis that they immediately attacked them, and a great battle, which took place outside Elmina, was decided in favour of the Elminas, chiefly because the Dutch shelled the Fantis off the field. The Elminas reported all this to the Ashantis, and forthwith an Ashanti army (under Atchampong) descended to the coast. Matters were now most complicated. England and Holland were on friendly terms; Cape Coast Castle (the centre of Fanti) belonged to Great Britain, Elmina belonged to Holland; the respective Governors were opposed to any conflict, yet both were said to have been secretly conniving at, and assisting their own party in, the war. It was impossible that these complications should continue, and eventually Holland decided to retire altogether. Accordingly, in 1872, after somewhat lengthy negotiations, England purchased all the Dutch forts.

Before this had been brought about, however, an Ashanti army was on the war-path against the Krepes (a small tribe near the Volta River), who were, in 1868, easily conquered. This alone might have been regarded as nothing more than a border raid, but the affair bore a different complexion when it was known that certain European missionaries and their wives had been taken prisoners and carried off to Kumassi. Still, neither the Dutch nor the British considered that the captivity of German and Swiss missionaries formed a *casus belli* with Ashanti, and at Kumassi the unfortunate people were forced to remain until January, 1874. In the meanwhile the British Government were so confident that the

natives on the Gold Coast would settle down in peace after the withdrawal of the Dutch, that in 1869 they reduced the military garrisons and disbanded the 3rd West India Regiment.

The negotiations for the transfer of the Dutch forts to England took some considerable time, and in the case of Elmina several difficulties arose. In the first place, the Elminas did not wish to lose the support of the Dutch, and be transferred to British rule. Their enemies the Fantis were under British protection, so what chance, said they, would there be for *them*? This was fully represented to the home Government, and it was decided that Elmina should not be taken over unless the natives were agreeable. They were accordingly given the choice of remaining independent (when the Dutch should vacate), or of becoming subjects of Great Britain, in which case they were promised every protection. They at once recognized the hopelessness of attempting independence, in the face of their being surrounded by hostile tribes, and they finally consented to accept the protection of Great Britain. As far, therefore, as the Elminas themselves were concerned, all was plain sailing, but the Ashantis now put forward a claim to the ownership of Elmina, declaring that the Dutch were no more than tenants of the King of Ashanti, to whom they paid a sum of money annually. That the Ashantis had some right on their side is certain, for it will be remembered that, in 1701, they conquered Denkera, and captured amongst other things the pay-note of Elmina, by which the Dutch had agreed to pay monthly rent to the King of Denkera, on whose ground the forts stood, and moreover, from this time the Dutch made their monthly payments to the King of Ashanti. The Dutch, however, maintained that by the "Macleane Treaty" of 1831 Ashanti had abandoned all claim to Denkera, and had consequently lost the right to receive monthly payment for

Elmina. But the Dutch did not stop payment after 1831, though they now averred that the nature of the payment had changed, and had become merely the price of a certain number of slaves supplied periodically to them by the king of Ashanti. The payment under these circumstances might have been repudiated, but the British Government decided to do nothing mean in the matter, and therefore fully satisfied the Ashanti claim by doubling the amount of the payment hitherto made by the Dutch, on the understanding that there should be no question of England owing allegiance to Ashanti, that Ashanti should not be required to supply slaves to Elmina, and, in short, that the payment should be regarded as a subsidy for the maintenance of commerce between the Coast and the northern kingdom. The Ashantis were well pleased, and in 1872 Elmina was finally handed over to Great Britain. There was something dramatic about the withdrawal of the Dutch from the forts which they had occupied for upwards of two centuries, and by special request of Holland, Mr. Pope-Hennessy (an old friend of that country, and at the time Governor-General of British West Africa) was deputed to take possession of them in the name of Great Britain. At sunrise on the 6th April, the Union Jack was run up at Elmina by the side of the Dutch flag; at sunset both came down together; at sunrise on the following day, the Union Jack alone was hoisted, and the Dutch had left the Gold Coast.

To go back a little, in 1868 Kwoffi Kari-Kari came to the throne, and, following in the footsteps of former kings of Ashanti, gave early signs of martial ambition. We have already mentioned his expedition against the Krepes and the capture of the missionaries, and while the negotiations for the transfer of the forts were in progress, attempts were being made by the British Administrator to obtain the release of the white prisoners. The king, however, refused to interfere,

stating that the prisoners were fair captives of war and the property of the chief who had taken them, and who now declined to surrender them except for a ransom of 1800 ounces of gold-dust. The Administrator would have nothing to say to the demand, and asserted his authority by closing the roads to Ashanti, and so stopping all trade with that country. How the matter would have ended it is impossible to say, for, before there was time for any result, the transfer of Elmina to the British took place, and on the occasion (quite oblivious of the missionary question) handsome presents were sent to the king of Ashanti. For some few months the hands of the officials were too full to pay much attention to the captivity of the white men; troubles had arisen at most of the newly-acquired forts between those natives who had formerly been Dutch subjects and those who had been English, the former being indirectly supported by Ashanti. When affairs had become more settled, the matter of the ransom was again discussed, and although the British Government refused to pay anything, it was suggested to the Basle Mission (of which the captives were members) that they should offer a sum of £1000 for the surrender of the missionaries. This offer was eventually made and accepted, and the captives were brought down to the Prah to be handed over. In the meantime the king, anxious to make a name for himself as a warrior, determined to drive the hated English from the coast, and he solemnly swore before his army that he would "carry his golden stool to Cape Coast Castle, and there wash it in English blood." His plans were soon formed; two of his generals were sent with a small army to the western part of the Gold Coast, while the principal force (consisting of some 50,000 warriors) followed in the wake of the missionaries towards the Prah. Curiously enough, nothing of their warlike preparations appears to have been known to the British authorities, who were

waiting at Cape Coast Castle to receive the captives, and hand over the ransom. A hitch now occurred; the missionaries were left on the far side of the Prah, while the envoys proceeded to Cape Coast Castle to obtain the £1000; this the Governor declined to pay over until the captives were brought down to him. The envoys, finding the Governor obdurate, promised to return and fetch the missionaries, but before leaving, managed to buy on credit a considerable quantity of goods from the merchants in the place. No sooner had they returned to Fomana than the captives were informed that the negotiations had failed, and that they were to be taken back to Kumassi. Why the king did not hand over the missionaries and get the money, which it was known that he was most anxious to obtain, is not clear; it is evident that he did not desire to harm his captives, as they were never actually maltreated, and possibly his sole idea in retaining them was to strengthen his hand in the war upon which he was embarking. Be that as it may, the missionaries returned to Kumassi, and, by the end of January, 1873, the whole Ashanti army was in full march towards the coast.

No preparations were made to meet the invasion until the British protectorate had already been entered. The Ashanti hosts poured over the boundary in three distinct columns; on the west Denkera, on the east Akim, and in the centre Assin, were all simultaneously invaded, laid waste, and pillaged. The unfortunate kings and chiefs fled before the enemy, and sent urgent requests for assistance to the Administrator at Cape Coast Castle. Yet so ignorant were the authorities of the real state of affairs that much time was wasted in sending an officer to Assin to discover if there were any truth in the rumours of an invasion. The report that he brought back showed that the state of affairs was most critical, and all that could be hoped for was the defence of our various forts on the coast. For this purpose there was at the disposal of the

Administrator a force numbering barely 600 men; of these 167 belonged to the West India Regiment, broken up into five or six detachments; 200 were local volunteers, and the remainder Hausa Constabulary. With such a miserable handful of men it was impossible that much could be done, but it was known that the Ashantis had a wholesome dread of the guns of the forts, and it was not expected that they would advance within artillery range. Still, it was impossible for the officials to shut their eyes to the fact that the Assins, Akims, Denkeras, Fantis, and other tribes who were under British protection were being driven from their homes, murdered, and robbed in all directions, and it was necessary, if England meant to retain her position in West Africa, to make some effort to stem the tide of invasion. With this object an attempt was made to raise an army of native irregulars, and it was estimated that 60,000 men would be found to take the field; ammunition and firearms were supplied in large quantities, and the army of the Fanti Confederation was soon prepared to meet the Ashantis. The whole scheme, however, turned out a gigantic farce; the Fantis were not fighting men, and nothing would induce them to engage the enemy, before whom, on every occasion, they fled like sheep. At length the Ashantis had arrived at Yan-Kumassi,¹ and the Fantis were sent out to reconnoitre, but were promptly surrounded, cut up, and routed. At Dunquah also (within twenty miles of Cape Coast Castle) the Ashantis were again victorious, and Cape Coast Castle was flooded with fugitives from the neighbouring districts. But Cape Coast Castle was not at present the Ashanti objective, their designs being bent on Elmina, for the capture of which they made the most elaborate preparations—even to the construction of scaling-ladders.

Things were looking as black as they well could for our

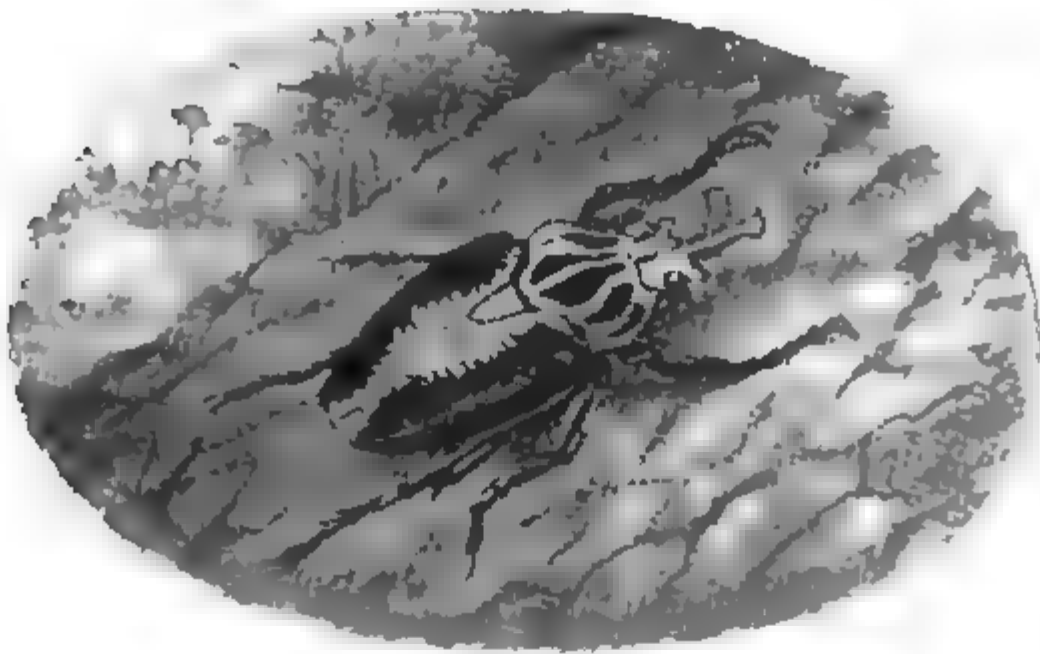
¹ 1st March, 1873.

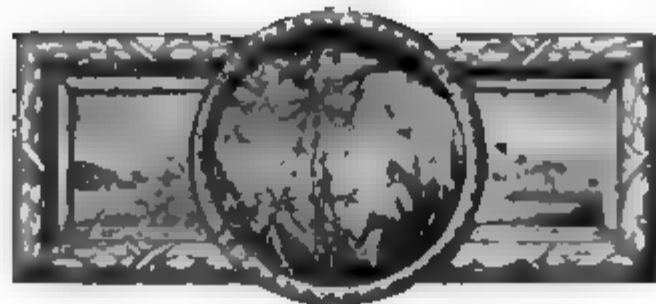
chances of saving the forts, and, but for the timely assistance rendered by the three British men-of-war stationed on the coast, they must have all been lost. A hundred blue-jackets garrisoned the Elmina forts and kept the Ashantis at a distance, while defensive arrangements were made at Cape Coast Castle and our other possessions. It was the middle of May, 1873, when this serious news reached England, and the Government immediately despatched a force of Marines (110 strong) under Lieutenant-Colonel F. W. Festing, with some mountain guns, rockets, and ammunition, in H.M.S. *Baracouta* (Captain E. R. Fremantle). This reinforcement arrived on the 7th June, and operations were at once commenced. The Elmina natives, whose town was situated outside the forts, were known to be disaffected, and it was decided to disarm them. They were accordingly called upon to give up their arms by a certain hour or to take the consequences. They failed to comply with the order, and the town was promptly surrounded, shelled, and burnt to the ground, the natives taking refuge in the bush, and being pursued by the sailors and marines. A running fight ensued, until the Elmina men had been driven several miles away, when the British force was collected and returned to the coast; yet hardly had they done so than an Ashanti army, which had been lurking in the neighbourhood, seized the opportunity to rush in on Elmina. The naval detachments were already on their way to their ships, and while they were being hailed, Colonel Festing despatched the marines and Hausas to meet the attack, successfully holding the enemy in check until the arrival of the blue-jackets. The latter event decided the day, but it was due more to good luck than good management. The boats having put back, Lieutenant Wells¹ formed up his men, and started in the direction of the firing, when, after proceeding for some little distance inland, he

¹ Died shortly afterwards on the voyage to England of yellow fever.

suddenly found himself behind a garden wall, looking over which he discovered that he was on the flank and within fifty yards of the Ashanti army, who were now pressing the force under Colonel Festing. Instantly the wall was lined, and so deadly was the effect of the Snider volleys that the enemy, completely taken by surprise, was forced to retire with immense loss.

This decisive action somewhat damped the ardour of the Ashantis, who, however, continued to maintain their hold on the country round Elmina and Cape Coast Castle, and to check the hostile movements of the patrols sent out from the forts. No engagements on a large scale took place during the next few months, though the natives on one or two occasions had serious conflicts with parties from the men-of-war, in which several officers were severely wounded, and all that was attempted by the local government was to act on the defensive until the promised relief came from England. What form this took we shall relate in the next chapter.





CHAPTER VI.

THE TWO ASHANTI EXPEDITIONS.

THE Ashantis having menaced the Gold Coast forts and insulted the local authorities in every conceivable way, the British Government decided that it was now necessary to take action in the matter, but still hoping that the turbulent tribe might be reduced to reason without the necessity of employing British soldiers in so deadly a climate, some fifty special service officers were despatched from England in September, 1873, with instructions to endeavour to organize a native army. The command was given to Sir Garnet Wolseley,¹ and his orders were to call upon the king of Ashanti to withdraw his army from the British protectorate, and to pay an indemnity; if he succeeded in this without fighting, he was instructed to make a treaty of peace with Ashanti. If, on the other hand, the king of Ashanti refused to withdraw, a Fanti army was to be raised, and, in co-operation with the Hausas of Captain (afterwards Sir John) Glover, was to drive the Ashantis across the frontier, peace being concluded as soon as possible. As a last resort, if Wolseley found, after visiting the Gold Coast, that it was impossible to carry out his instructions without the employment of white troops, then—and only then—he was empowered to send home for the regiments which were held in waiting for the purpose.

¹ The present Commander-in-Chief.

No one with any knowledge of the natives of the Gold Coast doubted for a moment what the result would be, and the *Times* correspondent,¹ writing from Sierra Leone on the 27th September, gave his views on the subject in the following words :—"There is not, I venture to assert, the least prospect of the Commander-in-Chief being able to bring this war to an honourable termination without European troops. They need not exceed 2000 in number, they need not be employed more than two months; but they are essential to the success of this expedition, as Sir Garnet Wolseley will discover before he has been long upon the Gold Coast." Still, it was contended, British soldiers had never yet been required to subdue West African tribes, and natives well supplied with arms, and organized and led by British officers, ought to be able to wipe out any number of their ill-armed and ill-disciplined fellow-countrymen. It was, however, forgotten that the Fantis, from whom the army was to be recruited, had no pretensions to being a warlike people, and, in fact, had already and frequently proved themselves, even when well led, to be absolutely worthless. Furthermore, it was forgotten that the Ashantis to a man were born warriors, that they had never met with serious opposition, and that for several months they had occupied, as a conquering army, a large tract of country which was under British protection.

Sir Garnet arrived at Cape Coast Castle on the 2nd October, and immediately set to work to discover the actual state of affairs. The Ashanti army was still menacing Cape Coast and Elmina, and, it was quite evident, had no intention of retiring from their positions, unless driven out. It became a question whether this could be effected with native troops, or whether it would be necessary to send for the British regiments. The only regulars available on the spot were a few

¹ Winwoode Reade.



A GOLD COAST MAIDEN.

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blue-jackets, 200 marines, 200 men of the West India Regiment, and about 150 Hausas, and as soon as reconnaissances had been made, it was decided that with such an insignificant force it would be quite impossible to crush the Ashanti army. However, the General, having made hasty dispositions for looking after the forts, commenced to carry out his instructions. A letter was sent to the king of Ashanti commanding him to withdraw his army from British territory. This was intercepted by the war-chiefs, who immediately replied that Ashanti had no quarrel with the white man, and that if England handed over the countries (such as Denkera, Assin, Wassaw, and Akim) which had originally belonged to Ashanti, then all would be well. This reply was in a measure satisfactory, since it left Sir Garnet unfettered as to his course of action; there was no longer any question of diplomacy, and the only thing that remained was to form plans for striking a severe blow at the Ashanti power. The kings and chiefs of Fanti were summoned to a palaver, at which the situation was discussed, and they were given to understand that they were expected to raise an army to drive away the enemy. They were ordered to return each to his own part of the country, accompanied by a British officer, who would organize the native levies, and the chiefs would receive a bounty for each man enlisted, while the men themselves would be supplied with food, ammunition, and pay. A day was fixed when the newly-raised army should assemble at Dunquah, where Sir Garnet was to review them.

The organization of a native army had thus commenced; the special service officers went off in all directions with the chiefs, and others were despatched further afield on similar errands. In the course of time the latter began to come in; from Sierra Leone came a small force of Kossoos, from Lagos a hundred Hausas, from Winnebah one company, and from the Oil Rivers (Bonny and Opobo) two companies. These

were formed into two irregular regiments, commanded respectively by Lieutenant-Colonel Evelyn Wood, V.C., and Major Baker-Russell, and during the ensuing operations did good work, being composed of better stuff than the Fanti levies. All this recruiting took time, but in the interval Sir Garnet and his Staff were busy; the defences of the forts were looked to, roads were improved, and information was collected, while, most important of all, the British regiments were sent for. The situation at this period was certainly peculiar, and probably unique in the annals of warfare—"a Major-General and his Staff without any army, and without any hope of getting an army for months to come; while the enemy lay only fifteen miles off, in such a position, and at such a distance from its base that, with a sufficient force of disciplined troops, it might have been utterly destroyed."¹ However, the troops were not at hand, and all that could be done was to make the best of a bad business, until the British regiments arrived. There was plenty to occupy the time, and Sir Garnet at once started operations, with the object of harassing the Ashantis. The first affair took place on the 14th October at Essaman (or Assamun), an advanced post of the Ashanti army encamped at Mampon, which, from its situation in dense bush and midway between Mampon and the coast, had been converted into a species of arsenal. The Ashantis considered it quite impregnable, since, as they said, white men were useless at bush-fighting; they were, however, completely taken by surprise by the little British force (about 600 men), and after a sharp tussle were driven off, when the village and its stores were burnt. The effect of this engagement, coupled with the destruction of Ampenee on the same day, somewhat costly though it was in the matter of numbers placed *hors de combat*, was felt far and wide; the idea that British troops would not attack the Ashantis in the

¹ Winwoode Reade.

bush was once and for ever got rid of, while such of the Elmina and other natives who were previously on the side of Ashanti immediately came in and swore allegiance to our Queen.

In the meanwhile, the day appointed for the great review of Fanti levies at Dunquah was drawing near. Colonel Festing had been sent to the spot to make preparations, and had erected a stockaded fort, where fifty men of the West India Regiment (with two seven-pounder guns and rocket appliances) were posted. The enlistment of Fantis proved to be anything but a success,¹ only a few hundreds being brought in, in place of the expected thousands, yet they soon had an opportunity of showing their fighting qualities. Information arrived that the Ashanti army was withdrawing from its position, and that a column was marching between Dunquah and Abrakrampa (a village about nine miles distant). Sir Garnet's plans were immediately formed, and he determined to strike a blow at the retiring column. With this object Festing was ordered to march from Dunquah direct on Abrakrampa, while Wolseley took his force of blue-jackets and marines from Cape Coast to Abrakrampa, thence marching on Dunquah, the idea being to attack the enemy simultaneously on both flanks. Unfortunately, however, the climate was found so trying that the little white force was a day late in reaching Abrakrampa, thus leaving Festing and his natives to engage the Ashantis alone. This he did with all vigour, though the Fanti levies, to use the Colonel's own words, had to be induced to fight "with more than verbal persuasion." The engagement lasted some hours, and several British officers were wounded, yet who gained the day remained a disputed point; a portion of the Ashanti camp was destroyed, but on the other hand the Ashantis did not evacuate their

¹ The idea of employing the Fantis as soldiers was eventually abandoned, but their services as carriers were most valuable.

position. As we have said, they were already on the march towards their own country, not because they had been driven off, but for the reason that they had exhausted the supplies of the neighbourhood, and found it difficult to find food, since they had lost the support of the Elmina men. The retirement was continued in an orderly manner, the British force attacking the rear-guard when opportunity offered, and their action throughout may be likened to that of a terrier snapping at an elephant's heels. The terrier never actually bit the elephant, but still he drove him steadily ahead, until eventually he saw him off the premises. Early in December the last stragglers of the Ashanti host had quitted British territory, had crossed the Prah, and were on their way to Kumassi. A few rebellious coast villages were reduced to submission by the gun-boats, transport (in the shape of carriers)¹ for the coming expedition was organized, and the way was now clear for the advance on Ashanti.

On these minor operations some severe criticisms were passed, at the time, by several of the war correspondents who had accompanied Sir Garnet Wolseley from England. These gentlemen were doubtless chagrined at not being able to record something more stirring than a series of petty engagements, for it must be remembered that the professional war correspondent was an innovation (produced by the Franco-German war, which always afforded a sufficiency of startling "copy"), and had never before intruded himself to such an extent on the commander of a British expedition. It was only natural, therefore, that the General's every action should be freely criticized, and that he should be censured by more than one able correspondent for not attempting to defeat an army of 30,000 men with a half-disciplined force of one-thirtieth its strength. From a newspaper point of view, it would have been magnificent—had it succeeded; from a

¹ 17,000 Fantis were engaged as carriers and road-maker.

general's point of view it would have been absolute folly, for foresight and prudence are not the least of a general's attributes, and a waiting game is not unfrequently the best. At any rate, in this case Sir Garnet knew his enemy, and he also knew the capabilities of the strange troops which he had at his command; he had relieved the coast from the state of terror into which it had been thrown by the presence of the Ashanti army, he had freed British territory from the obnoxious invader; more than this he did not choose to risk. That he was fully justified was proved by subsequent events.

The British troops arrived at the beginning of December, and consisted of a battalion of the Rifle Brigade, the 42nd Highlanders, the 23rd Welsh Fusiliers, a battalion of Marines, and detachments of Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers. The preparations for the march up country were not yet completed, so the troopships were sent to sea again, and it was not until the New Year of 1874 that the troops were disembarked at Cape Coast Castle. Everything was now ready for them; a series of well-provisioned rest camps had been established from the coast to Prahsu (on the banks of the Prah), and the eighty-four miles of forest path had been transformed into a fairly wide and good road, while for a great part of the distance a temporary telegraph line had been laid down by the Royal Engineers. No detail had been neglected, and never had an expedition been more carefully planned, for in such a climate everything depended on the health of the troops,¹ and it had been recognized from the first that the British soldiers must only be kept on shore as short a time as possible. To escape the ravages of fever it was absolutely necessary that the troops should leave the coast again by the 1st March, consequently there were but two months for the actual campaign. The base of operations was established at Prahsu, whence to Kumassi, the capital of

¹ Seventy medical officers were employed to look after the troops.

Ashanti, was roughly a hundred miles. As far as Prahsu the way had been made easy for our men ; huts had been erected at each halting-place, water had been laid on, and food got ready, so that the troops were relieved of the usual tent-pitching and other labours of a campaign. Beyond Prahsu the enemy's country began, though the Ashantis themselves did not consider that their land was being invaded until the Adansi Hills (thirty miles from the Prah) had been reached.

It is necessary, before proceeding further, to give the reader some idea of the nature of the country through which the expedition had to pass to reach Kumassi, though in reality there is little to be said about it, since, from the immediate neighbourhood of Cape Coast to Prahsu, and again from Prahsu to Kumassi, there is a great similarity in the topography and scenery. A dense primeval forest extends almost the whole distance, its enormous trees festooned and matted together with creepers and climbing plants. The sun is shut out by the luxuriant foliage, and even at midday the light is dim ; no breeze can force its way through the branches ; a ghostly stillness reigns everywhere, broken only by the chattering of monkeys and the flutter of bright-plumaged birds, while the moist stifling heat is at times almost insupportable. This vast woodland grows alike on plain, hill, and vale, and the country, in addition to the usual gradual rise from the sea-board towards the interior, has an abundance of low hills¹ and shallow valleys. The villages are mostly situated on the hills, and narrow winding paths connect one with another, while in the valleys the streams flow through bogs and marshes overgrown with an almost impenetrable jungle of bamboo. The land round the villages is usually cleared to some considerable extent for cultivation, but as the soil becomes exhausted fresh clearings are made,

¹ The highest range on the road to Kumassi is 1500 feet above sea level.

and the fallow land produces a thick undergrowth, which forms a most effective protection to the village—a natural obstacle so high and dense that to overcome it necessitates the application of the axe. From this brief description it will be understood that as soon as the Prah was crossed, the march of the British column was not unattended with difficulties. In the open forest, with good scouts ahead, the advance could be little impeded, but the danger lay in the neighbourhood of the villages, where an ambuscade might at any moment annihilate the head of the column.

The general plan of campaign was as follows:—Kumassi was to be taken in the shortest possible time, the main force concentrating at Prahsu. On the 15th January they were to cross the river, while the native forces under Glover, Butler, and Dalrymple were to cross simultaneously at three other points some miles apart. On the 13th the missionary captives arrived from Kumassi, bringing messages from the king, who now desired to avert the threatened invasion of his capital. A reply was sent stating the price of peace, but the terms were too high, and, by the 16th, Lord Gifford's advanced guard had established itself at Moinsie, at the foot of the Adansi Hills, where he was soon joined by the main body, who covered the thirty miles from Prahsu with comparative ease. Here the enemy first showed signs of opposition, though nothing serious occurred to check the advance. On the 23rd headquarters were at Fomana, and within the next week the native levies under Wood and Baker-Russell had captured several villages¹ with little opposition. Meanwhile the Ashantis had taken up a position at Amoaful, a small town situated on a height, and surrounded by an almost impenetrable bush, and there, within twenty miles of Kumassi, they determined to make a stand against the white invaders.

¹ At Borborassie, on the 29th January, Captain James Nichol was treacherously shot by the Ashantis while parleying with them.

Everything was in their favour; they outnumbered the British force by five to one; they knew the country well, and were well versed in the methods of fighting in it; moreover, they possessed the confidence engendered by the knowledge that they had never, for centuries, suffered what they considered a serious defeat. On the 31st January matters came to a head, and, acting on the information brought in by Gifford's scouts, Sir Garnet Wolseley made preparations for a desperate fight—and such it proved to be.

The battle of Amoaful was the only serious affair in which the British troops were engaged, and from a pictorial point of view must certainly have been most disappointing to the artist correspondents. The enemy were never visible for an instant, though their slugs fell among the attacking force "like the hail of a summer storm." The Black Watch bore the brunt of the battle, being supported on the left and right by the Naval Brigade and native levies, and almost at once a hundred men were wounded. "It was miserable fun; a volley of slugs was poured from the dense bush, and was replied to by the fire from our Sniders; it was fighting in the dark, though the superiority of weapons told in the end, and the work was completed by the guns and rocket detachments, which shelled the Ashanti camp until the enemy could stand it no longer." Then the Highlanders swept forward, their bagpipes playing them on, and the position was carried. This, however, was not the *finale*, for the Ashantis made a fierce onslaught on the right flank, which, but for its repulse by the Rifle Brigade (held in reserve), might have caused considerable trouble. As it was, the Ashantis were forced to retire, and the British troops had won their first "bush" fight. Still, the Ashantis were not, by any means, routed, and on the following day a stand was made at the village of Becquah, which had to be attacked and destroyed before our advance could continue. The next

halt was at Ingimmamu, whence it was decided to make a dash for Kumassi, a temporary breakdown in the transport necessitating merely a flying visit to the capital. The enemy now had recourse to ambuscades, which were encountered by the advanced guard at frequent intervals along the road, and on the 4th February the Ashanti army was encountered for the last time, at Ordahsu. The engagement, while it lasted, was sharp, but eventually the enemy gave way, and the Rifle Brigade rushed into the village.

With Ordahsu ended the fighting, and the Black Watch immediately set out to march the six miles to Kumassi, which they reached, without further opposition, the same day. Every endeavour was, however, made by the Ashantis to prevent their capital being occupied by the white men. Their muskets had failed them, and they now turned their attention to religion and diplomacy. Human sacrifices were made along the road to stay the advance, and flags of truce were sent out, the chiefs offering almost any terms. The surrender of the king was the sole condition on which Sir Garnet would think of treating, and as that worthy had fled, Kumassi was occupied. On the following day (the king not having made his submission) the town was burnt to the ground, and the British force commenced the return march to the coast. Now a somewhat curious incident occurred. The troops had hardly lost sight of the smoke and flames of the burning town, than messengers from the king overtook them. They came in hot haste to the General, bearing a present of a thousand ounces of gold, and begging that a treaty should be sent for the king to sign. This was accordingly done, and the signed treaty was sent down to Cape Coast Castle in the course of the month. What at the time seemed so extraordinary was that the king should take so much trouble to make peace after his capital had been destroyed, and after he knew that the invaders were

departing ; the mystery, however, was solved when news came that Glover's column, unknown to Sir Garnet, was marching on Kumassi from the east, and the Ashantis were under the impression that they were to be still further molested.

Glover's movements require some explanation. It will be remembered that, when the invasion of Ashanti commenced, in addition to the main column, with whose progress we have been alone concerned, three other columns had been told off to co-operate and cross the Prah simultaneously at different points. Of these, the western Akim levies under Butler, were to cross at Akim Prahsu, thirty miles to the east of the main column ; the British officers carried out their instructions, and crossed the river, but the Akims refused to follow. The Wassaw levies, under Dalrymple, also refused to cross the river ; and the only natives of these three columns who followed their officers were the Yorubas and Hausas commanded by Glover. Glover had gone to Accra and the Volta to raise an army and march thence to Kumassi ; in gathering recruits he was fairly successful, principally owing to the fact that he was liberal in the distribution of arms and money ; when, however, it came to moving his men, he found that obstacles were placed in his way. To the east of the Volta there were two tribes—the Aquamoo and the Awoonah—with whom the Accras had a feud, and the latter did not consider it safe to quit their homes and embark on an expedition without first giving their enemies a blow sufficiently heavy to keep them quiet during their absence. Therefore, Glover was forced to undertake, quite against his will, an expedition across the Volta. On this enterprise he was engaged when he suddenly received orders from Sir Garnet to leave the Awoonahs alone and cross the Prah on the 15th January. His first step was to call a meeting of the Accra chiefs, to whom he explained that the Awoonahs must wait, and that his force must march

forthwith to Kumassi. The chiefs were unanimous in their reply—they refused to have anything to do with Ashanti—and consequently Glover withdrew his Yorubas and Hausas, with about a thousand of whom he crossed the Prah on the appointed day. He then commenced his march north-west, meeting with little opposition; and, when approaching the capital, he heard of its destruction by the British. His one object was to push ahead so as to support the main force, and he despatched Captain Sartorius with twenty men to get in touch with Sir Garnet. This was, perhaps, one of the finest things done in this Ashanti war, for Sartorius took his handful of men right into the midst of a defeated enemy, infuriated at their capital having been burnt down, through the still mouldering ruins of Kumassi, and down to Fomana, where he found the General—a total distance of fifty miles without the loss of a single man. The Ashantis were paralyzed with fear; Sartorius' advanced guard was a new terror, and Glover's column they imagined to be the force kept back to complete the British victory and to exterminate their nation.

This, then, is the solution of the mystery why the king sent after Sir Garnet begging for peace, for in his message he requested that Glover's advance might be stopped. Glover, however, meanwhile had followed on the heels of Sartorius, and marching through the capital, eventually brought his brave little army of natives down to Cape Coast. But for his timely arrival at Kumassi, it is hardly likely that the Ashantis would have sued for peace, or that any treaty would have been signed. The Ashanti campaign of 1874 was over; the Ashanti power was, for the time being at any rate, crushed; the forts on the Gold Coast were relieved; and by the middle of March the British regiments had disembarked in England. That the campaign was a brilliant success is certain, and for some years it was hoped that the Ashanti

kingdom had been broken up once and for all, but subsequent events proved that the burning of the capital and of sundry towns and villages, and the indemnity of 50,000 ounces of gold¹ had little real effect on the warlike spirit of the people. Towns in this part of the world take but a few weeks to rebuild, and gold is fairly plentiful; it was, therefore, not strange that, within a very few years, Ashanti was itself again, and as early as 1881, the king had commenced to send threatening messages to the British officials on the coast. This continued for some years, and although without doubt the 1874 campaign had considerably curtailed the power of the king, nevertheless he was still powerful enough to snap his fingers at the British authorities of the Gold Coast Colony, and do pretty much as he pleased. Matters were, however, allowed to take their course until, in 1895, it became necessary, for several reasons, to take Ashanti in hand. The kingdom had now been included in the British sphere of influence, and perhaps the primary reason for interference with Ashanti was the approach of the French towards its northern borders. Be that as it may, king Prempeh² had never been too friendly to the Gold Coast, and owing to the disturbed state of the interior, the trade of the Colony was suffering considerably; moreover, there were other grounds of complaint: Prempeh had failed to carry out the terms of the treaties with the British, he had checked the flow of trade to the coast, continued to carry on human sacrifices at Kumassi, and, finally, neglected to pay the portion of the war indemnity of 1874 still due.

The Governor of the Gold Coast, considering that the time was ripe for action, despatched a mission to Kumassi, calling on Prempeh to carry out the terms of his treaties, to accept a British protectorate, and to receive a British Resident into

¹ As a matter of fact only 10,000 ounces were ever paid.

² Officially, Kwaku Dua III.

his capital. The king, however, refused to discuss matters with the Gold Coast authorities, and sent as envoys to England his brother Prince John and another Ansah, who were not received, but were sent back to their own country with a message referring Prempeh to the Governor of the Gold Coast. A Special Commissioner, bearing an ultimatum, visited Kumassi in the autumn of 1895, and the king was given the alternative of complying with the demands of the Governor or of having his country invaded and probably annexed to the Gold Coast. No reply was returned to this ultimatum, and it was decided that the expedition, which had already been prepared, should forthwith be launched. The experience gained by the campaign of 1874 was of immense advantage to the organizers of the new expedition, and the fact that the three principal officers of the Headquarters' Staff of the Army (Lord Wolseley, Sir Redvers Buller, and Sir Evelyn Wood) had all served in the previous expedition made matters easy. Although it was not considered that the resistance was likely to be even what it had been in 1874, and although the native troops on the West Coast of Africa were quite sufficient for the purpose, still the Government deemed it advisable to provide a certain leaven of British soldiers, so that there should be no possibility of a reverse. The command of the expedition was given to Colonel (now Sir Francis) Scott, Chief of the Gold Coast Constabulary,¹ and his force consisted of the following:—Special Service Corps, 250 men ;² West Yorkshire Regiment, 400 men ; West India Regiment, 400 men ; Hausas, 1000 men ; Native Levies, 800, besides various detachments of the Royal Engineers, Royal Artillery, Army Service Corps, Ordnance Store Corps, Medical Staff Corps, and Army Pay Department.

¹ Served with the Black Watch in the Ashanti campaign of 1874.

² "The Composite Battalion."

Everything was soon ready, and, by the end of December, the troops from England had landed at Cape Coast Castle, which was considered to be a more suitable base than Accra, the capital. A month before their arrival, the transport officers had been hard at work, and, with the aid of 6000 native carriers, had forwarded to Prahsu (now, as in 1874, the main dépôt) supplies for the troops for the whole campaign. A pontoon-bridge had been thrown across the Prah, small trestle-bridges across the streams further ahead, and the road had been improved as far as possible.¹ Prahsu was reached with little trouble, and on the 5th January, 1896, the invasion of Ashanti commenced. The campaign was conducted on a similar plan to that of 1874; Major Baden-Powell, with an advanced guard of native scouts, acted as Lord Gifford had done; the main column marched by the direct road over the Adansi Hills, while Captain O'Donnell led a force of 200 Lagos Hausas and about 800 native levies by the route taken by Captain Glover in 1874, and Captain Dehamel, with a small body of Hausas and men of the West India Regiment, moved from Elmina on Kumassi. Thus, the main column was intended to attack the capital from the south, the others co-operating from the east and west. It was soon evident, however, that the Ashantis did not mean fighting, and as the columns advanced, they were received in a most friendly manner by the minor chiefs and the people of the country. On the 14th January the expedition was at Amoaful, and on the 17th Kumassi was entered without so much as a single shot having been fired.

Prempeh had probably seen from the beginning that resistance would be useless, and the old fighting spirit of his people having been subdued by the former expedition, there

¹ Mr. Bennett Burleigh, the correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph*, rode a bicycle from Cape Coast Castle to Prahsu. Vide *Two Campaigns; Madagascar and Ashantee*, 1896.

was no influential war party to drive him against his will. Consequently, when the troops entered his capital, the king was found seated in state to see them march past, which appealed somewhat ludicrously to the British soldier, who for some weeks had been "spoiling for a fight"; it was, however, his last state function, for, within a few days he had been deposed, and, together with his principal relations, was being marched a prisoner to the coast. Thus ended the Ashanti campaign of 1896, resulting in the annexation by Great Britain of a country which had been for a century or more the one great drawback to the prosperity of the Coast towns. But even the bloodless campaign was not without its cloud. The climate, as usual, had accounted for several deaths and much sickness, malarial fever and sunstroke cutting short several promising lives.¹ Prince Henry of Battenberg, who was attached to the Head-quarter Staff, developed fever when within a few miles of Kumassi, and was sent back to the coast, only, however, to succumb to the deadly disease on the 20th January, while being conveyed to England in H.M.S. *Blonde*.

From a military point of view there was nothing very startling in either of these expeditions. Both accomplished what there was to do, and the lessons which they taught have not been without their value. It is now acknowledged that the employment of white troops in West Africa should be avoided whenever possible, and, with the rapidly-increasing Hausa force always available, it is doubtful if it will ever be necessary again to despatch a British regiment to take part in a campaign in this unhealthy portion of Africa. Ashanti

¹ The following statistics of the sickness have been published:—Officers, two died, forty per cent. treated; non-commissioned officers, eight died, forty-two per cent. treated; British soldiers, eight died, forty-two per cent. treated; native soldiers about thirty-two per cent. treated. On the whole, the figures are considerably lower than in the 1874 expedition.

was a few years ago considered to be the most warlike kingdom in West Africa. We have seen how it fared when brought face to face with disciplined troops commanded by English officers, and as with the Ashantis so would it probably be with any other of the reputed fighting tribes who inhabit the hinterlands of our various West Coast possessions. Politically, the results of the two expeditions were enormous; in 1874 the Ashantis learned for the first time that the British power was irresistible, and that even fetish could not avert defeat, while the entry into the capital and the flight of the king deprived his Majesty for ever of the support of numerous small chiefs; in 1896 the fall of Prempeh and the annexation of his kingdom deprived Ashanti of all independence, and gave to the Gold Coast a valuable hinterland.



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The early history of the Slave Coast (of which Lagos forms a part) is very similar to that of the West Coast of Africa generally. It was first visited by the Portuguese; then became a resort of trading vessels, and finally, as its name implies, the great slave-producing region. "The Slave Coast," writes Burton in 1863, "offers peculiar facilities for shipping cargoes. Low, marshy, and malarious, it could hardly be held by foreign garrisons. The dreadful surf which beats upon the shore defends the barracoons from land attack, and can be safely braved in canoes only. The bush and jungle conceal the movements of those on land, and the succession of lagoons forming natural canals along the sea-board enables the trader in human flesh and blood to ship his cargo where and when least expected." Such was Lagos and its vicinity thirty-five years ago—before it had passed into our hands—what British rule and the abolition of the slave-trade has done for the place is one of the most remarkable chapters in the story of Africa. Yet its rise was predicted by Burton; for, unenthusiastic as he was in most matters pertaining to West Africa, he appears to have thought that, with care, Lagos might retrieve the name of this somewhat ill-reputed quarter of the globe.¹

Lagos² was thus named by the early Portuguese settlers because of the mass of lakes or lagoons which surround the place. After the Portuguese rule, the French stepped in and built a fort on the island, though it was soon abandoned, of Porto Novo, was fixed as the western boundary of the Colony of Lagos: thence the line runs due north.

¹ "With such simple precautions, I am certain that Lagos, when ten years old, will be able to provide for itself, and that in ten more it would become the emporium of the great and rich Yoruba and Dahomian countries, whose natural adit and issue it is."—*Wanderings in West Africa*. 1863.

² The original native name of Lagos Island was Aonin or Awani, corrupted by Europeans to Oni. Modern Yorubas call it Eko or Ichoo.

and when in 1851 British power became paramount, Lagos had been for a century and a half in the hands of the natives, and was nothing more than a slaving port for ships of all nations. British traders established factories at Badagry, close by, but suffered considerably at the hands of the various surrounding tribes, and in 1851, Kosoko, king of Lagos, attacked this Badagry settlement. England, being at the time enthusiastic about the suppression of the slave-trade, now seized the opportunity to take charge of Lagos. Kosoko was defeated and driven from the town, and Akitoye (his cousin, who had formerly been king) was reinstated. He committed suicide in 1853, when his son Docemo was proclaimed king by the British Consul, who had been appointed two years before. Docemo reigned until August, 1861, when, in return for an annual pension of about £1500, he was persuaded to cede his kingdom to Great Britain. The pension was fixed at the average of the king's revenue, and as he continued to draw it and live in semi-state for several years, it cannot be said that he did badly, more especially when it is known that his kingdom consisted of barely four square miles of swampy land. In 1863 Lagos¹ and the neighbouring territories were formed into a separate government, but three years later they were attached, with the other West Coast settlements, to Sierra Leone. This continued until the conclusion of the Ashanti war in 1874, when Lagos became part of the newly-constituted Gold Coast Colony, and in 1886 it started life on its own account as a distinct Crown Colony. It certainly derived no advantage from its connection either with Sierra Leone or the Gold Coast, and since it has had a free hand its development has been phenomenal, as evidenced by the following figures :—

¹ The great pioneer of the Colony and its most successful Governor was the late Sir John Glover. Vide *Life of Sir J. G. Glover, G.C.M.G.*, by Lady Glover. London, 1897.

LAGOS COLONY.

Year.	Imports.	Exports.	Total Value.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£	£	£	£
1862 . .	77,933	61,933	139,866	7,130	6,511
1865 . .	114,234	175,636	289,870	24,082	24,095
1870 . .	400,558	515,366	915,924	41,684	42,379
1875 . .	459,737	517,536	977,273	43,337	44,380
1880 . .	407,370	576,510	983,880	47,987	55,476
1885 . .	542,564	614,181	1,156,745	63,505	40,314
1890 . .	500,828	595,193	1,096,021	56,341	63,701
1891 . .	607,719	716,643	1,324,362	78,625	66,388
1892 . .	522,041	577,083	1,099,124	68,421	86,513
1893 . .	749,027	836,295	1,585,322	115,317	101,251
1894 . .	744,561	821,682	1,566,243	137,017	124,829
1895 . .	815,815 ¹	985,595 ²	1,801,410	142,049	144,483

This condition of the Colony has not been brought about without considerable trouble and expense, for the mere island of Lagos, without the Yoruba tribes of the interior, would be unable to effect much in a commercial way. As early, therefore, as 1886, Governor Moloney grasped the situation, and by entering into friendly relations with the neighbouring tribes, gradually laid the foundations of our present position in Yorubaland. Treaties were made with all the chiefs who ruled over the countries between Lagos and the Niger Territories, so that when the noted "scramble for Africa" commenced Great Britain was enabled to establish her rights against all comers. The principal difficulty which has had

¹ Cotton goods, £274,427; spirits, £106,335; tobacco, £25,615.

² Of this, palm oil and kernels amounted to £525,987.



YOUTH OF MOUNT AID.

[To face page 100.]

to be met of late years has been the pacification of the interior, whose numerous tribes have from time immemorial been at war among themselves. The Yoruba¹ tribes of Oyo, Ijesha, Ibadan, Ifé, Egba, Jebu, and Ekiti were the great offenders, who, forming alliances one with another, carried on a continuous warfare. There was no peace for this quarter of Africa, for no sooner were the differences between two tribes settled than a fresh *casus belli* arose. For several years the Egbas and the Ibadans were the chief belligerents, and the other tribes sided with one or the other, as they thought advisable, changing over at a moment's notice if they found themselves getting beaten. Later on, the Egbas settled down to more peaceful pursuits, when the Ibadans turned their attention to the Ilorins in the north, and war continued until quite recently.² The nature of the warfare, however, was not very serious as regards loss of life; there were few engagements of any magnitude, and, as a rule, the hostilities were confined to highway robbery and kidnapping. Occasionally a raid into the enemy's country was organized, but it was seldom carried out if there was any chance of resistance. Still, all this has had a most deterrent effect on trade; the Yorubas in the main are agriculturists and keen traders, but hitherto they have had no outlet for their produce, the roads having been beset in all directions by marauders. The first object of the Lagos authorities, after the conclusion of commercial treaties with all the tribes, was to put a stop to this state of affairs, at first by remonstrance and then by force of arms. The treaties contained a clause by which all trade routes in the interior were to be kept open, and all the tribes having passed under the protection of the Colony, it became the duty of the latter to punish anyone interfering with the free transit of merchandise through the interior.

¹ Or Yarriba; also sometimes called Nago. ² *Ibid* Chapter XIV.

The first to suffer from the new order of things were the Jebus, who, in the beginning of 1892, blocked all the roads and stopped trade between Lagos and the interior. They and the Egbas were the "middle-men" of all trade in these parts, and, peaceful methods having failed, it was found necessary to commence operations against the Jebus. The little campaign was short, sharp, and decisive; the Jebus were speedily reduced to reason, and, as a result, the Egbas submitted to the demands of the Colony without the necessity for a display of arms.¹ The total exports from Lagos in 1892 are given as £577,083; in the following year we find they have increased to £836,295; further comment is needless. In 1893 Governor Carter extended the influence of the Colony to the north, and by establishing a British Resident at Ibadan, with a force of Constabulary to watch the Ilorin frontier, he completed the subjugation of all the tribes. Petty disturbances, it is true, had to be suppressed in 1894 and 1895; and, in 1896, the threatening attitude of the Ilorins necessitated the despatch of reinforcements to Odo Otin, the Lagos frontier post. Early in 1897 matters were brought to a head; the Ilorins attacked in force, and, suffering a severe defeat, retreated only to find their capital about to be assailed by the troops of the Royal Niger Company,² whose timely arrival probably settled for ever the last serious trouble with the natives of the Lagos hinterland.

The growth of the "baby colony of West Africa" has been rapid; ten years ago it consisted of nothing more than the islands of Lagos and Iddo, Badagry, Palma, and Leckie, with a small protectorate extending over the territories to the east

¹ The Jebu expedition (West India Regiment and Hausa Constabulary) cost under £5000. Vide *The Lagos Expeditionary Force in West Africa*, by Captain Hon. A. S. Hardinge. *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, vol. xxxvi., pages 916 and 1175.

² Vide Chapter XV.

and west ; now the area of the Colony and its protectorates is estimated at 22,000 square miles, with a population of three millions ; while its revenue, in the decade, has trebled itself. Small wonder that those who have been instrumental in its growth should consider that they have dragged West Africa from the slough of despond. Without questioning the immense commercial importance of Lagos, it will be well to discuss a few of the items in the Blue Book statistics. The merchant will naturally ask to what is to be attributed a sudden increase of several hundreds of thousands of pounds in the value of exports, and whether it is likely to be maintained. Now, looking at the trade reports, there is little doubt that the increase is mainly due to two commodities—palm oil (including kernels) and rubber. With regard to the latter, the industry is a new one, and in three years the trade has increased in value by something like £300,000 per annum, which, of course, accounts for the startling export figures of the last few years. From latest advices, however (1897), the rubber industry appears to be already on the decline ;¹ the trees were sapped dry and killed in the first rush to collect the rubber, and as the young trees will not bear for several years, we must expect a considerable decrease in Lagos exports for the next few years, though, doubtless, the result of recent events in the interior will add to the trade of the Colony very considerably. In the matter of palm oil, there is little to be said ; it continues to show a steady increase year by year, and the trees being practically inexhaustible, there is no reason why there should ever be a failure in the quantity produced, but in this respect all our West Coast possessions are similarly situated, and, as we said about the Gold Coast, it is a dangerous thing for a colony

¹ This may be partly accounted for by the fact that a very serious adulteration of rubber has recently taken place, the natives having introduced stones, &c., to add to the weight of the rubber.

to stand or fall on one commodity, and that one liable to great fluctuations in price.¹

The town of Lagos considers itself quite the most enlightened spot in West Africa, and with some reason, for the traveller who has already visited the more western colonies is struck with amazement at the sight of Lagos and its "up-to-date" appearance. There is an esplanade, where, in the cool hours, English ladies may be seen riding and walking; there are even carriages; the new Government House is a massive edifice, which, if not architecturally picturesque, must at any rate impress the native with its size; and there is a race-course, where periodically as much excitement reigns as on the Downs at Epsom. These are, of course, only a few of the Lagos sights, though they are mostly unique for West Africa, and have done a good deal for the Colony's go-ahead reputation. But, sad to say, the place has its dark side, and neither race-courses nor esplanades can improve its climate, which, as Sir Gilbert Carter says, is "most unhealthy for Europeans, and quite unsuitable for ladies."² The fact is, that the town is so situated that it is quite impossible to make it healthy, lying, as it does, barely a foot above sea-level, and surrounded by malaria-laden creeks. Steps have been taken to improve the sanitation by clearing away blocks of wretched native hovels, opening up the streets, and draining where possible, but the death-rate of Europeans appears to increase rather than to diminish, the average for the last few years being about fifteen per cent. of the white population; "this," says the Colonial Report, "can only be termed appalling, and clearly shows that this part of Africa is still unfortunately entitled to be termed 'the White Man's Grave.'"³

¹ In the ten years ending 1891 the highest price of palm oil was £42 5s. per ton; the lowest price, £19 2s. 6d. *Vide* Chapter XXII.

² Royal Colonial Institute. May 11th, 1897.

³ Average rainfall about sixty inches; August, and December to March are dry months, the remainder wet.

One other great drawback to the situation of Lagos is its approach from the sea, a dangerous bar keeping ocean steamers at a respectful distance, and necessitating the transshipment of all goods into small local steamers and boats of light draught. The bar is formed by the silt washed down by the rivers and streams which enter the Bight of Benin at this spot, and the depth of the water at high tide never exceeds fifteen feet; the channel, moreover, shifts almost daily, and the surf is of the roughest. A careful survey of the bar was made in 1891, and a scheme for the improvement of the approaches to the port was drawn up, but the estimated cost (£830,000) was too great to admit of the work being undertaken. More recently a second scheme has been put forward, viz. to cut a short ship-canal from a point on the coast near Lagos into the harbour; it is doubtful, however, if this will ever be carried out, and it is quite possible that eventually some more convenient point on the coast will be found, which, with a railway connecting it with some healthy spot further inland, will entirely supersede the town of Lagos. For the present no great change in this direction can be looked for; the authorities have quite enough to do to open up the interior, which is being effected, among other ways, by pushing a railway northwards towards Ilorin, and by improving the roads so as to make them available for wheeled traffic.¹ With the establishment of these improved trade routes, the Colony may be expected to advance with even greater strides than it has already been doing, for the matter of transport, as we have said in a previous chapter, has always proved a great hindrance to West African trade. Though Lagos is fortunate in having good water communications with the interior, yet these being

¹ Excellent roads have now been completed from Jebu Ode to Ejinrin (nineteen miles) and to Epe (twenty-two miles), which are important market towns.

only open for a few months of the year, the produce at other times has to be borne in small loads on the heads of natives—as can be imagined, a very costly arrangement. With regard to the railway mentioned above, every endeavour is being made to expedite its construction, and the line is making good progress, but the labour and cost of bridging the creeks near the coast is so enormous that a rapid extension inland cannot be expected. At present the project is more or less in its infancy, though it is proposed ultimately to connect Lagos with the Middle Niger north of Ilorin. Starting from Iddo Island, the line is to run westward to Otto and Abeokuta (two important markets), whence it will probably be extended to Ibadan, Oyo, and Ilorin, with branch lines to other large towns. Great dissatisfaction has been expressed by the commercial population of the town that the terminus of the railway was not to be in Lagos itself, but, since this would entail an additional expense of £170,000 (chiefly for bridges), the original terminus at Iddo has very wisely been adhered to—at any rate for some few years to come.

From the above the reader will have gained an idea of the progress made by the Colony and the methods by which it is proposed to increase its prosperity, though, perhaps, sufficient credit has not been given to the two Governors who have been instrumental in its recent advancement. The progressive policy of Sir Alfred Moloney, who erected the Colony in 1886, and presided over its affairs for five years, acquired for Lagos the hinterland, without which it would now be of little value. His knowledge of forestry also opened up new industries, amongst them the rubber trade—of which he was the pioneer in West Africa. Previous to his transfer to Lagos, he was administering the Government of the Gold Coast, and on one occasion had to travel some two hundred miles into the interior to settle a political dispute.

Being an inquisitive man (as he says) he, by dint of inquiry found from the natives that they got their "bird-lime" from a particular tree. In one of the forests he took some men with him to see the tree which yielded this substance, collected specimens and forwarded them to Kew, whose officials reported that it was equal to the best Para rubber. Sir Gilbert Carter,¹ who succeeded Sir Alfred Moloney² in 1891, continued the work of his predecessor, and by careful diplomacy, combined with a resort to stronger measures where necessary, drew to the Colony the trade of all the interior tribes, handing over his governorship of five and a half years with a knowledge that his charge had made greater progress during his term of office than had, in an equal period, any British colony in West Africa. The *kudos*, of course, always falls to the head of affairs, though in justice it must be said that a great factor of success is the organization of the staff of officials who make up the government of a colony, and in this respect Lagos has been singularly fortunate. While on this subject, it will be of interest to describe the system of government adopted in a Crown Colony of this description. The legislative council consists of the Governor (and Commander-in-Chief), Colonial Secretary, Queen's Advocate, Treasurer, Chief Justice, and five unofficial members, the first four constituting the Executive Council. The law of the land is the law of England, modified and adapted by colonial ordinances, and administered by the Chief Justice, assisted in the interior by police magistrates and district commissioners. For the preservation of order, there is a force of about eight hundred Hausa Constabulary and two hundred and fifty civil police,³ armed with modern rifles, and

¹ Now Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of Jamaica.

² Now Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Windward Islands.

Annual cost of the Constabulary and Police about £25,000. A battalion of the West India Regiment is now serving in the Colony.

thoroughly efficient, while the navy is represented by two armed stern-wheel steamers (of light draught for river work), and H.M.S. *Alecto*, which is stationed in the neighbourhood, and which is the only man-of-war that can enter the harbour.

So far Lagos has never required the assistance of British troops, and as long as her boundaries remain as at present she will be well able to look after her own affairs. With, however, an extension of the Colony north and east by a possible incorporation of a portion of such British territories as are now administered by the Royal Niger Company and the Niger Coast Protectorate, events may necessitate Imperial aid, though the excellent fighting qualities of many of the native tribes of these parts would make it an easy matter to recruit almost any number of men of sufficient grit to tackle their fellow-Africans. It must be remembered that, for generations, the natural state of the tribesmen of this part has been war; the cause is of little account in their eyes, so long as the result will bring them gain. Hitherto they have fought either in self-defence, or for the purpose of acquiring slaves—which meant money—no better field for recruiting mercenaries could possibly be found. It would, however, be erroneous to imagine that Lagos and its hinterland are inhabited by a warlike people, for probably nowhere in Africa are the aboriginal tribes more desirous of settling down to peaceful pursuits than here; could the natives be assured of protection and immunity from danger, it is not too much to say that every spear-head would readily be converted into a “grubber,” and men who have lived all their lives “with strung bows” would lay aside their weapons and take to agriculture. The people, as we have already pointed out, are naturally agriculturists and traders, but their chiefs, unfortunately, prefer the booty of warfare to legitimate commerce—to put it plainly, they are gamblers, always ready to risk a war with a chance of a



NORTHERN YOMUDAS.

hundred per cent. profit, and looking on the ordinary revenues of peaceful times as a very poor business. The power of the chief to make war when he pleases is, luckily, almost a thing of the past, for all the principal rulers of the interior tribes are subsidized by the Lagos Government, who requires them to sign a treaty of friendship and commerce. Thus if one subsidized chief makes war on another, the aggressor brings down on his head the wrath of the British authorities—whose little punitive expeditions strike home swiftly and to the point, and the troubler troubles no more.

The principal towns of Yorubaland (as the Lagos interior is called) are the capitals of the various tribes who belong to the Yoruba nation, and in many cases they are large and protected by high mud walls, though their population varies immensely from year to year, for towns which a few years ago were of considerable importance have, in several instances, become mere villages.¹ Each large town is a commercial centre, connected with the neighbouring towns by fairly good paths, and in many cases by rivers, the produce of the country gradually filtering through these inland markets on its way to the coast. The nominal supreme ruler of Yoruba is the Alafin of Oyo, but his power is now of little real account, and his capital, in the matter of population, is by no means as large as many of the other towns. The Fulah (Mohammedan) conquest of Ilorin and the northern parts of Yoruba (about 1830) disintegrated the empire,² and

¹ The following are, according to Sir Alfred Moloney, the chief towns of Yorubaland, with their supposed population; the figures are, however, not at all reliable, and are subject to fluctuation (by thousands) every year:—Ibadan, 150,000; Oghomosho, 60,000; Ilesha, 40,000; Ede, 50,000; Oshogbo, 60,000; Ipetomodu (Ife), 40,000; Jebu Ode, 60,000; Ilobu, 60,000; Ikirun, 60,000; Ejigbo, 40,000; and Abeokuta, 100,000.

² *Vide* Chapter XIV.

split it up into numerous petty kingdoms, though these have always been ready to unite to repel the attacks of their two common foes, the Dahomians on the west and the Mohammedans on the north. Dahomey (Ewe), since its overthrow by the French (1893), has ceased its aggressions, but Mohammedan influence has spread far and wide, extending even to Lagos, and, in the natural course of events, those of the pagans who refuse Christianity embrace Islam.¹ At the present time the towns of the greatest importance to the Colony are Ibadan, "the London of Negroland" (where there is a British Resident), and Abeokuta,² the Egba capital, which has long been the head-quarters of the Yoruba section of the Church Missionary Society. Like all the towns and villages of this part of Africa, they are composed of a number of mud-walled enclosures, in which stand the rectangular huts of a family, thatched in a loose and untidy manner, and having the most ramshackle appearance. Large and well-shaded spaces are set apart for the markets, and trees and small patches of cultivation crop up here and there among the dwellings, while the people lead an apparently happy, careless life, and take no thought for the morrow. The country near the coast is low-lying and cut up with numerous streams and rivers, which in many places unite to form a series of lagoons³ (or backwaters) before emptying themselves into the Bight of Benin. Further inland the usual forest belt extends from west to east, and beyond this the country becomes more open, or what may be described as park-like in appearance, ranges of

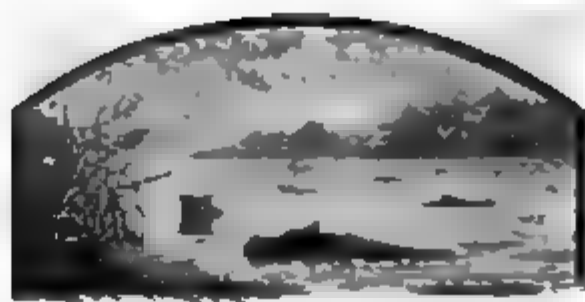
¹ *Vide* Chapter XX.

² Abe-okuta signifies the "Undercliff," so named from its rocky situation. It was founded about 1825 to resist the constant invasions of Dahomey.

³ "Such lagoons run along parallel to the sea for hundreds of miles, and connect, with two slight and removable interruptions, the Volta and the Oil Rivers."—*Moloney*.

hills of considerable height being found within fifty miles of Lagos, and stretching with alternating plateaux and valleys up to the edge of the Niger basin. The soil is everywhere remarkably fertile, and where the villages have been unmolested, some well-cultivated farms are to be seen. In this respect the Lagos hinterland compares most favourably with other parts of West Africa, and with a very little encouragement the natives could be persuaded to take seriously to agriculture as a means of livelihood. It will thus be seen that this remote little Colony has before it a future far more brilliant than can ever be hoped for either the Gold Coast or Sierra Leone—a future which, so far as one can judge, cannot fail to be successful—though, of course, its development must be a matter of time. The revenue of the Colony is not sufficient to enable energetic officials to carry out schemes of any magnitude, and events must perforce move slowly; yet here, if anywhere in West Africa, is being built up a heritage of which our children will be justly proud, and which will prove to be of inestimable commercial value to twentieth-century Great Britain.





CHAPTER VIII.

THE NIGER¹ AND ITS EARLY EXPLORERS.

ADJOINING the Colony of Lagos on the east and north lies by far the most important and interesting portion of West Africa, a coast line which enjoys a hinterland worthy of the name, and through which debouches the grand river whose discovery occupied the attention of geographers and explorers for the first quarter of the present century. To this vast region has recently been applied the term *Nigeria*, and the interest of the British public in the river whose exploration proved fatal to Mungo Park and many another brave Briton, has been awakened by a number of little wars, each of which has played a part in cementing the ties of the British Empire in Africa. The story of the Niger is one of sufficient interest to merit being told at some length; there is a certain glamour of romance connected with the step-by-step discovery and development of the country, and costly though they have been in lives, yet the result is that the Niger Territories (comprising an area of some 600,000 square

¹ The origin of the name is obscure; Ptolemy called it *Nigeir* or *Nigir*, from which writers in Latin transcribed it *Niger*, but it has no connection with the word *Niger*, i.e. *black*. The natives on the banks call it by various names (generally meaning "great river"), of which the following are the principal:—*Kwora* (Kanuri), *Fari n'rua* (Hausa), *Dsone* (Timbuctoo), *Oya* (Yoruba), *Furodi* (Nupe), *Edu* (Bassa), *Ehuloba* (Igbara), *Ujimini fufu* (Igara), *Oumini* (Abo), *Anyim* (Ibo), *Uzie* (Sobo), *Akassa-toro* (Brass), and *Bahr Sudan* (Arabs).

miles) bids fair to become the most prosperous and remunerative of England's possessions in West Africa.

The Niger district is at present under two absolutely distinct administrations, viz. the Royal Niger Company, Chartered and Limited, and the Niger Coast Protectorate, both under the supervision of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but in Africa as independent of one another as any two ordinary British Colonies. For purposes of history, however, we propose dealing with the countries watered by the Niger, and its tributaries and affluents, as a whole, leaving the subsequent division of the Protectorate for discussion in separate chapters.

There is nothing interesting about the ancient history of the Niger countries, and, though they have doubtless been peopled by negroes for countless ages, what changes the land has seen must remain for ever unknown; for here there are no time-worn ruins with hieroglyphics and inscriptions, no history tablets or other memorials to be yielded up by the earth. The region shows no signs of having been more than the habitat of beings, superior to the wild beasts amongst which they dwelt only in the fact that they lived in huts of mud and grass, and that they were able to communicate with one another by word of mouth. No traces remain of any stages of development until within comparatively recent times, and the oldest literature on the subject takes us back no further than a few centuries. The Greeks knew of the countries south of the Great Desert only by report, though Ptolemy pretends to a certain amount of knowledge, mentioning in particular two large rivers as traversing the Soudan, viz. the Gir¹ and the Nigir. The Romans, it is certain, sent expeditions across the Sahara as far south as the Upper Niger, though they have handed down little information on the subject. It remained for two Arab geographers (Ebn

¹ Congo.

Batuta, 1353, and Leo Africanus, 1556), to furnish us with the earliest accounts of the Niger and its people, yet even they have nothing of great interest to relate, and the history of the Niger may be said to commence with the close of the last century, prior to which time no European traveller had set foot in the land. Its mysteries suddenly called forth all the energies of Englishmen, Government took the matter in hand, sending out expedition after expedition, until, eventually, as we shall see, the secret was unlocked. The course of the Niger was discovered, attempts were made to open up the country to trade, then Government withdrew from further enterprise, and the rest was left to philanthropists and speculative companies. "The days of discovery in this part of Africa," writes Winwoode Reade, in 1872, "are over; the Niger has gone out of fashion, and the present generation has been interested only in the story of the Nile." These words were written in one of the intervals of Niger fever. For fifty years it had raged, and, weakened by the effects, Englishmen were resting from their labours, although those behind the scenes were well aware that, quietly but surely, a little band of our countrymen were building up for a future generation an edifice, the foundation of which had been laid by the heroic Park.

To the African Association, it will be remembered, was mainly due the initiation of the exploration of this part of Africa, and we have recounted in an earlier chapter¹ their efforts to open up a way to the Niger from various points. In 1795, after the failure of former enterprises, the Association's choice fell on a young Scotchman, Mungo Park, who, at the age of twenty-four, volunteered to follow up the work which had been entrusted to Major Houghton, and which had so unfortunately been cut short. That the selection was a wise one was proved by the results.

¹ See Chapter II.

African exploration a century ago, the reader hardly requires to be told, was very different to what it is now, for, even though a hundred years have made little change in the negro, the travels of the various white men have each one assisted, in no small measure, to pave the way for his successors. In Mungo Park's day a European was to the natives a thing so extraordinary as to be almost supernatural, a being not to be admitted willingly into their country, and, if admitted for the sake of the presents which he doled out, to be an object for plunder, and possibly murder, should opportunity offer. With a knowledge of all these obstacles to his advance, the great pioneer of African travel plunged into a region which was still blank on the map, though not before he had acquired a certain amount of information about the countries he was to visit, and a fair smattering of the Mandingo language. His sole companions were two native servants, and his baggage consisted of two days' provisions and a few small articles to be used for purchasing food. As was to be expected, Park's journey eastward from Gambia was anything but plain sailing, and although at first he was received kindly by the pagan Mandingos, it was no long time before he fell foul of the Mohammedans, by whom he was plundered of almost everything he possessed. From this time his life was miserable beyond description, and he suffered hardships of every imaginable kind. Insulted, imprisoned, starved, robbed, and stripped naked; escaping only to be recaptured; parted from his faithful servants; the sport of negro crowds—such was Mungo's lot for seven long, weary months. Yet, all this while, he was moving forward towards the goal of his ambition—a sight of the great Niger River—and the hardships which he endured seem to have had the sole effect of spurring him on. Never had any African traveller lived through such experiences as those of Park before he reached Segou, the capital of Bambarra, where

on the banks of the Niger he sat down (21st July, 1796), the first European to gaze on the Great Waters.¹

The traveller's heart was light ; he had accomplished the principal task allotted to him, and his vicissitudes were almost forgotten ; moreover, he had hopes that the almost civilized state in which the people of Segou lived would bring him a measure of hospitality. He was, however, doomed to disappointment, for he speedily discovered that he was among a people by whom he was regarded not only with astonishment, but with absolute terror. It was evident that they saw in his arrival the worst of ill-omens, and the king sent word to him that he was on no account to be allowed to enter the town. Dejected, tired, and hungry, Park sought refuge from a coming storm in a neighbouring village, but only to find himself driven from hut to hut. Worn out at last, he seated himself beneath a tree, where he remained, hour after hour, pondering over his misfortunes, until, as night came on, a woman approached him, and asked him his story. Then came the one drop of comfort in the traveller's cup of bitterness. The negress conducted him to her hut, where she and other women prepared food for him, and sang him to sleep—an incident which has become famous in the annals of African travel, and on which the Duchess of Devonshire wrote the following lines :—

The loud wind roared, the rain fell fast,
The white man yielded to the blast ;
He sat him down beneath the tree,
For weary, sad, and faint was he,
And ah ! no wife, no mother's care
For him the milk or corn prepare.

Chorus—

The white man shall our pity share ;
Alas ! no wife or mother's care
For him the milk or corn prepare.

¹ Joliba, one of the many names by which the Niger is known to the natives ; other names have been given on page 120.

The storm is o'er, the tempest passed.
And mercy's voice has hushed the blast,
The wind is heard in whispers low,
The white man far away must go,
But ever in his heart must bear
Remembrance of the negro's care.

Chorus—

Go, white man, go, but with thee bear
The negro's wish, the negro's prayer,
Remembrance of the negro's care.

But Park's presence was so distasteful to the people of Segu that the king sent him 5000 cowries,¹ asking him to leave the country, which, two days later, he did, deciding to explore the course of the river, which had now such a strange fascination for him. For months he wandered by the Niger, hoping against hope to reach Timbuctoo, and, finally, after enduring everything short of actual murder, he retraced his steps and travelled south to Bamaku, whence he moved westward to Kamalia. At this place he fell in with a slave caravan marching to the Gambia, and, after an absence of two eventful years, he once more grasped the hands of the friends who had seen him depart, and who had long since given him up for lost.

Returning to England at the end of 1797, Park became the hero of the hour, and after devoting some considerable time to the publication of his journals, he married and settled down in Scotland. His poor circumstances, however, made him somewhat discontented, and, though devoted to his wife, the spirit of adventure was still strong in him. He forgot the miseries which had accompanied his travels in Africa, and he longed to be once more exploring the course of the Niger. A few years later the opportunity came, and Park was placed in command of a Government expedition, the object of which was to determine the course of the great river,

¹ Now worth about half-a-crown.

and to endeavour to establish friendly relations with the various tribes on its banks. He started under very different circumstances to those of his first visit to Gambia; he received a captain's commission, and was accompanied by his brother-in-law (Dr. Alexander Anderson) as lieutenant, and by Mr. George Scott as draughtsman. The expedition was to consist of forty-five European soldiers, and as many natives and transport animals as he might consider necessary when leaving for the interior; moreover, he was given a free hand as to his return route, and was permitted to draw on the Government up to £5000.

In March, 1805, Park, Anderson, Scott, and four English mechanics reached Goree Island, then a British possession.¹ From the garrison were selected Lieutenant Martyn, thirty-five privates, and two seamen, and the whole party then proceeded to the Gambia, whence the caravan started for the Niger by the route followed by Park on his return journey of 1797. The leader of the expedition soon discovered that his progress would be if anything slower and more troublesome than when he had made the journey alone. The number of Europeans and the size of the caravan was a signal to the natives to practise every species of extortion and robbery; the soldiers, uninspired with the object of the expedition, soon became disheartened by the hardships which they were called on to endure, sickened and died. Frequent attacks were made on the caravan, whose members were soon too weak even to defend their property. Their arms and beasts of burden were stolen from them, and their path was marked by the graves of their companions, who had fallen by the hands of the natives, or had died from sickness. Wild beasts also were a continual terror to the party, and more than one life was ended by lions or wolves.

Despite all these terrible experiences, Park's heart never

¹ *Vide* Chapter IV.

sank, and he continued to carry the remnant of his expedition forward, eventually, in August, 1805, reaching the river at Bamaku—though with only six of his Europeans still alive. Scott had disappeared, Anderson was at the point of death, Martyn was an encumbrance to the party, and there remained only the one man to do the work of twenty. He, however, had energy and endurance to face worse evils than had as yet confronted him, and he had once more set eyes on the mighty rolling Joliba—the loadstone which had drawn him from his northern home, his wife, and children. He now set to work to build a boat, out of old canoes, in which he might embark his party, and endeavour to trace the river to its mouth. By the middle of November all was ready for the voyage, but not before Anderson and two more men had been laid in the grave. Park's last letters home were dated from Sansandig, just before embarking; they were written to his wife and to Lord Camden, the Colonial Secretary, and contained words full of hope. These—the last communication ever received from the discoverer of the Niger—were entrusted, together with the journals of the expedition, to Isaaco, Park's faithful guide, by whom they were conveyed to the coast and transmitted in safety to England.

Nine men left Sansandig on the 19th November, 1805, in the frail craft—Mungo Park, Martyn, three European soldiers, one of whom was raving mad and the others prostrate, a guide named Amadi, and three slaves as paddlers. The boat was provisioned for several weeks, and Park intended to land nowhere and to have no intercourse with the natives on his voyage to the coast. It must be remembered that at the time there were a hundred conjectures as to where the Niger terminated; some imagined that it ended in inland swamps and lakes, others that it flowed eastwards and joined the Nile, while Park himself was convinced that it eventually entered the Congo. Before him, therefore, there was a journey of

two or three thousand miles, but so confident was he of success that, in his last letter to his wife, he expressed the opinion that, by the following January, he would have reached the coast. Down the river the boat slowly passed, at first without mishap; then came a series of attacks by natives in canoes, all of which, however, were successfully driven off by Park's muskets.¹ Past Timbuctoo and into the Hausa country the adventurous little party paddled on, hopeful now that they had navigated a thousand miles of the river that they would reach their destination in safety. The mad soldier had, in the meanwhile, died, and Amadi's agreement having terminated, he left the boat, thus leaving Park to his own resources, should he come in contact with the natives on the bank. To Amadi the world is indebted for the last news of Park; shortly after he had severed his connection with the expedition the navigation of the river became difficult, the cataract of Boussa having been reached. Here a series of rocks stood up in the channel to bar the way, the current took the boat onward, the high banks and islands were crowded with armed natives, who, seeing the predicament that the strangers were in, hurled their weapons in showers on them. The boat struck on a rock, and, powerless to move it, the four Englishmen jumped into the river and perished.

¹ In 1823, Major Denham met, in Kuka, the son of a Fulah chief who had come from Timbuctoo. This man stated that he had frequently heard Park's expedition talked of, and he denied that the natives who pursued the boat in canoes had any evil intention; their object was mere curiosity to see the white men, and the canoes that followed Park from Timbuctoo contained messengers from the king, who desired to warn the strangers of the dangers of navigating the river lower down. Duncan, in *Travels in West Africa*, vol. ii., p. 181, gives the version of an eye-witness, who said that Amadi was the cause of the disaster, he having told the king of Yauri that Park had not paid his wages. The king stopped the canoes, and Park resisted. He was mortally wounded, but was brought alive into the king's presence, where he died.

Such was the fate of Park—a man who knew no fear, whose energy and endurance, though oftentimes tried to the utmost, never flagged, and who will ever be remembered as the greatest of African explorers.¹ To his old guide, Isaaco, was entrusted in 1810 the mission of discovering full details of his master's ill-fated end, and, in 1827, Park's son, Thomas, still believing his father to be alive, started on his journey into the interior from Accra to endeavour to find him, but never to be heard of again.

Park's theory that the Niger was an affluent of the Congo still carried weight in England, as is evident from the fact that, in 1816, the Government equipped a dual expedition. One party, under Captain Tuckey, was to proceed to the Congo, while the other, under Major Peddie, was to follow in Park's tracks and join hands with Captain Tuckey in the centre of Africa. The enterprise was a failure, for, although Tuckey navigated the Congo and acquired much valuable information, he died in the river, and Peddie and his companions succumbed to the climate before making much progress. In 1818, Major Gray and Dr. Dochart endeavoured to follow up the route of Major Peddie's party, but only to meet with the fate of their predecessors.

The next attempt to continue the work of Park was undertaken in 1820, when the Government decided to send an expedition across the Sahara from Tripoli, by the caravan route to Lake Chad. For this new enterprise were chosen Dr. Oudney, Lieutenant Clapperton, R.N., and Major Denham, and we now enter on the second phase of the exploration of the region which had, so far, swallowed up all travellers who had endeavoured to probe its secrets. The western route—that taken by Park—had been abandoned for several reasons, the hostility of the natives being the prin-

¹ A handsome statue of Mungo Park is to be seen in his native town—Selkirk.

cipal, while it was thought that the friendly relations that existed between Great Britain and the Basha of Tripoli might be utilized to ensure the safety of traversing the country to the south of his dominions, with which he had intercourse. Accordingly, in 1821, Clapperton's expedition¹ started for Murzuk, whence, after a whole year of delay and annoyance, they set out for the Sea of Soudan. The Basha, after considerable pressure, gave them a letter of introduction to the Sultan of Bornu, and they were accompanied by an escort of two hundred Arab horsemen with their chiefs. The party consisted, besides the three Englishmen already mentioned, of an English carpenter named Hillman and some servants—all natives of Africa except Jacob, a Gibraltar Jew, and Adolphus Sympkins (*alias* Columbus), who hailed from the island of St. Vincent. The provisions and numerous presents were conveyed on camels, and the *kafila* journeyed south through Bilma, reaching Bornu without accident, and with no great difficulty in less than three weeks. They were well received by the Sultan of Bornu at Kuka, the capital, and remained there, enjoying the greatest kindness and hospitality, for nearly a year, though Denham was the only one of the Europeans who was able to visit the neighbourhood of the town. Clapperton and Oudney were, throughout the sojourn in Kuka, too ill to leave their huts, and Hillman suffered from continuous fever and delirium, though between the attacks he worked hard at making boxes, chairs, and other things for the Sultan. His greatest feat, however, was the construction of carriages for two old brass four-pounder guns, which the Sultan had received from Tripoli. They were successfully mounted, a mule harness was designed by Denham, who also taught the natives to make canister shot, and trained them in

¶ ¹ *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the years 1822, 1823, and 1824*, by Major Denham, F.R.S., Captain Clapperton, and the late Dr. Oudney. London. 1828.

working the guns. Denham and the Sultan (who was a most enlightened native) became great friends, and the latter was not slow in utilizing the talents of the former for the fortification of his town.

The original intention of the expedition had been to spend but a short time in Bornu, and then to proceed into the Hausa country (to the west) until they hit off the Niger at a point somewhere near the spot where Park lost his life. The Sultan of Bornu was, however, loath to let them leave his capital, averring as his excuse that the letter which they had brought from the Basha of Tripoli made no mention of their intention to go beyond Bornu. The loss of their camels and horses by disease, and the inability to procure ready money to buy other beasts of burden, was a further cause of inaction. To a man of Denham's energy and restlessness this enforced idleness was extremely distasteful, and though, by the Sultan's permission, he visited Lake Chad and the neighbourhood, and spent his time in shooting and hunting, he desired greater excitement—a desire which he was shortly able to fulfil. The Arab escort which had accompanied the party from Murzuk remained idle at Kuka, and after the novelty of the new scenes had worn off they began to find the time hanging heavily on their hands. Accustomed to lead a roving life, and only visiting the towns when a fortunate razzia had provided them with the means of enjoying themselves, these children of the desert chafed under their present circumstances, and soon broke out into mutiny. As a means of curbing these unruly spirits their head chief proposed that they should accompany the Bornu troops on an expedition against Mandara, and the prospects of plunder and taking slaves soon induced them to join in the enterprise. Denham, who was still in good health and anxious to explore the country, saw in the raid an opportunity not to be lost, and, since he had received instructions before leaving England

to endeavour to follow any military expeditions of the natives, he determined to accompany the Arabs.

Oudney and Clapperton, who were still too ill to get about, disapproved of Denham's intentions, considering that it would prejudice the natives of the neighbouring districts when it became known that an Englishman, whose king disapproved of slavery, had taken part in an expedition, the sole object of which was the capture of slaves. Denham was not, however, to be dissuaded, and, although the Sultan at first put obstacles in his way, he succeeded in overtaking the force before it had gone very far. He was received by the Arab contingent with wild shouts of joy—the whole camp turning out to greet him—but, by the Sultan's orders, he was placed under the protection of the Bornu commander, Barca Gana, who treated him with all honour. The troops numbered some 3000 men, of whom only the small body of Arabs were armed with firearms, and, after several days of arduous marching, the towns of the Fulahs, or Fellatahs, were reached, when the fighting commenced. Everything was left to the Arabs, in whose weapons the Bornu commander placed the greatest confidence, and Bu Khaloom, the chief of the Arabs, led the attack in person. The first two towns were carried without difficulty, and quickly burnt. The third offered more resistance, but the defenders were soon driven out, only, however, to rally, and, with a fierce onslaught, completely rout the Arabs and Bornus. Poisoned arrows and spears rained through the air; Barca Gana had three horses killed under him; Bu Khaloom and his steed were mortally wounded, and Denham was wounded in the face and lost his horse. The whole army fled in confusion, the Fellatah horsemen pursuing, and killing all whom they overtook. Denham, endeavouring to escape on foot, was quickly caught; his last hour, he thought, had come, but the clothes which he wore were too much for his enemies, who refrained from



BOBOROJI, OR WANTERING FULAHs.

To face page 133.

damaging them with their weapons. He was seized and stripped, and though wounded in two or three places during the operation, he contrived, while his captors were disputing over the possession of his garments, to give them the slip. "Two of the Fellatahs," he says, "followed, and I ran on to the eastward, knowing that our stragglers would be in that direction, but still almost as much afraid of friends as foes. My pursuers gained on me, for the prickly underwood not only obstructed my passage, but tore my flesh miserably; and the delight with which I saw a mountain stream gliding along at the bottom of a deep ravine cannot be imagined. My strength had almost left me, and I seized the young branches issuing from the stump of a large tree which overhung the ravine, for the purpose of letting myself down into the water, as the sides were precipitous, when, under my hand, as the branch yielded to the weight of my body, a large *liffa*, the worst kind of serpent this country produces, rose from its coil, as if in the very act of striking. I was horror-struck, and deprived for a moment of all recollection—the branch slipped from my hand, and I tumbled headlong into the water beneath; this shock, however, revived me, and with three strokes of my arms I reached the opposite bank, which, with difficulty, I crawled up; and then, for the first time, felt myself safe from my pursuers."

Shortly after this he fell in with Barca Gana and Bu Khaloom, who, with half-a-dozen Arabs, were resisting the charges of a party of Fellatahs, in rear of the retreating army. He was quickly placed behind one of the horsemen, covered with a burnouse, and conveyed away at a gallop. The rout was complete, Bu Khaloom dropped dead from his poisoned wound, and any unfortunate man whose horse gave in was immediately slaughtered by the pursuing enemy. Few of the Arabs escaped, and those who succeeded in reaching Kuka were all more or less severely wounded.

Never had an expedition been more signally defeated, yet Denham, who, besides losing everything he possessed, had several wounds, and was suffering from the terrible hardships of his flight, writes:—"Such events, however, must sometimes be the consequence of exploring countries like these. The places I had visited were full of interest, and could never have been seen except by means of a military expedition, without still greater risk."

Ten months after their arrival in Kuka, Clapperton and Oudney left for Kano and the Hausa States, while Denham remained behind in order to take part in another expedition. During the six or seven months which had elapsed since his unfortunate visit to the Mandara country he had not been idle; he had accompanied an expedition, led by the Sultan in person, to the Munga country, and he had made many short excursions in the neighbourhood of the capital, and had collected an immense amount of information about the country and its people. His actions in taking part in these slave-raiding expeditions have been severely criticized, but his particular mission was of a military nature, his instructions being, as we have said, to make full inquiries into the fighting capacities and armaments of the various tribes of Central Africa. The Bornu people were at that time a warlike nation, and Denham consequently considered it advisable to see more of their prowess in arms, and thus, perhaps not too willingly, separated for a time from his companions. Fortune for once smiled on him, for barely a week of his solitude had passed when a kafile arrived from Tripoli, and with it stores and provisions for the mission, under the charge of Ensign Toole, of the 80th Regiment. This unexpected delivery gave Denham new life—"I had now," he writes, "money, health, and a desirable companion"—and he was ready for any wild adventure. The two Englishmen soon started on an excursion to the south of Lake Chad, where,

after exploring the Shari River and the Loggun country, Toole, to the great grief of his companion, died of fever. The loss to Denham was irreparable; he had become greatly attached to young Toole, who had scarcely completed his twenty-second year, and whom he described on his arrival as full of energy, cheerfulness, and good-fellowship. With his own hands he laid him in his grave at Angala—never before and never since visited by a European—then, feeling too sick at heart and in body to pursue his explorations, he returned to Kuka, where bad news awaited him, Dr. Oudney having died, on the 12th of January, at a place called Murmur, near Katagum.

Denham was confined to his hut with fever and an affection of the eyes for ten days, but he was soon at work again, and taking part in a war with the Baghirmis, who had threatened Bornu. On this excursion he witnessed at any rate one good battle, in which the Bornus, led by their Sultan, utterly routed 5000 Baghirmi warriors, the guns which Hillman had mounted doing great execution. Then came a second pleasant surprise; another Englishman, Mr. Tyrwhitt, arrived at Kuka with fresh stores, having been sent out by Government to relieve the expedition, and take presents to the Sultan. Denham and Tyrwhitt now proceeded to explore the eastern side of Lake Chad, and witnessed some more fighting, in which the Bornus came off second best.

It was now the end of July, 1824, and on returning once again to the capital, Clapperton and Hillman were found to have returned from their long journey to Sokoto. The former was in a miserable state of health, and the latter had suffered considerably from the climate and fatigue. Still they had accomplished the great object of the expedition, and had traversed the country from Lake Chad to the Middle Niger and back again, thus adding to the explorations of Park a

knowledge of the countries extending over ten degrees of longitude to the eastward.

Clapperton's journey was a very remarkable one, especially when it is considered that neither himself, Oudney, nor Hillman were, on leaving Kuka, in a fit state of health for even a less arduous undertaking, and it is astonishing that two of the three should have returned alive. They started with a caravan of Arab merchants, on the 14th December, 1823, and travelled almost due west to Katagum, near which place Oudney unfortunately succumbed to consumption, which he had contracted at Murzuk eighteen months before. Clapperton, having buried his friend, though suffering much from frequent attacks of ague, pushed on to Kano, and thence proceeded to Sokoto, where he was received by the great Sultan Bello with every kindness and attention. Of Bello we shall have much to write, suffice it now to say that he was a man of vast ability and enlightenment, who treated the English traveller with the greatest courtesy.¹ An extraordinary instance of the rapidity with which news travels in these parts was witnessed by Clapperton at one of his interviews with Sultan Bello, when he was asked how it had happened that Major Denham had lately been engaged in fighting against the Fulahs, Bello's subjects. This was naturally a somewhat unpleasant question, which, however, Clapperton might have explained away had not his interrogator produced as evidence numerous books and other articles belonging to Denham that had been captured after the defeat of the Bornu army. Clapperton, who, as we have seen, feared complications of this kind, informed the Sultan that his friend had only desired to see the country, and had had no intention of fighting against the inhabitants, whereupon the Sultan, with great generosity, handed over all Denham's books (amongst

¹ Sultan Bello proposed to Clapperton that an English consul and a physician should be appointed to reside at Sokoto.

them his journals) to Clapperton, laying all the blame on Bu Khaloom, the Arab chief. After remaining some time in Sokoto, Clapperton returned by his former route to Kuka, where once more the members of the mission were united.

Two months later Denham and Clapperton took leave of the Sultan of Bornu, and commenced the march to Tripoli, Denham visiting Lake Chad and Kanem *en route*.¹ At Tripoli the three survivors of this expedition (Clapperton, Denham, and Hillman) arrived at the end of January, 1825, whence they immediately sailed for England. Thus ended the most successful expedition which had up till this time been despatched to West Central Africa. The amount of information collected about these hitherto unknown regions was immense; the countries from Murzuk to Bornu, around Lake Chad, and from Bornu westward to Sokoto, had been visited for the first time by Europeans—by Englishmen authorized and paid by the British Government.

¹ Mr. Tyrwhitt remained at Kuka as British Consul, but died there within a very short time—in October, 1824.





CHAPTER IX.

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS OF THE NIGER.

AFTER the failures of the previous twenty years, the return of Denham and Clapperton from so long a sojourn in Central Africa was most encouraging, and the British Government, still eager to open up trade with the interior of Africa, decided to immediately send out another expedition. Sultan Bello, in the letter brought home by Clapperton, had expressed a desire to throw his country open to British trade, and to abandon the traffic in slaves, proposing also that English consuls should reside at places called Funda and Raka. He, moreover, had agreed that, on a certain date, he would send an escort to the coast town of Whydah, in the Bight of Benin, to conduct the Englishmen to Sokoto. The command of this expedition was given to Clapperton (who had been promoted Commander, R.N.) and in August, 1825, his health being quite restored, he started once more on his travels. He was allowed to take as a companion a Dr. Dickson; and two naval officers, Captain Pearce and Dr. Morrison, were sent with them, with particular instructions to explore and survey the country in all directions from Sokoto. The presents from the Government to Sultan Bello and the Sultan of Bornu were of considerable value, and the mission was in every way thoroughly well equipped. Besides Columbus (Major Denham's old servant) Clapperton took, as his personal attendant, a man who was destined to play a great part in the exploration of the country—his humble

and devoted servant, Richard Lander, on whom subsequently devolved the honour and glory of discovering the mouth of the Niger.

Towards the end of November, 1825, the little party of Englishmen reached the Bight of Benin, fully expecting to find Bello's escort waiting to receive them. To their great disappointment, however, on making inquiries, nothing could be heard of the escort, and even the name of the great Sultan of the Fellatahs was scarcely known. This dénouement was quite undreamt of, but Clapperton at once formed his plans, deciding to strike across country to Sokoto, in the hope of meeting the escort on the way. Dickson, having expressed a wish to undertake the exploration of Dahomey and join Clapperton at Sokoto, was dropped at Whydah, whence, accompanied by Columbus, he reached Dahomey in safety. From Dahomey he proceeded to Shar (seventeen days' march from Dahomey), and then commenced his journey to Yauri; how far he got was never known, for nothing more was heard of him or his servant. The rest of the party, meanwhile, sailed to the Benin river, where they met an English merchant of the name of Houtson, who advised them to start for the interior from the port of Badagry. The vessel accordingly put back, and on the 29th November, Clapperton and his companions set out through Yoruba to Sokoto, Mr. Houtson acting as guide as far as Eyeo (or Katunga), the capital of the Yoruba country.

No sooner had the march from the coast commenced than fever attacked every member of the party in succession, and before a month had elapsed, Captain Pearce and Dr. Morrison succumbed, both dying on the same day, the former at Engwa, and the latter at Jannah. Disheartened by the sudden loss of his two friends, Clapperton himself became ill, and Houtson and Lander followed suit,

though the journey was continued, and Katunga eventually reached on the 23rd January, 1826. Here they were forced to remain until the 7th March, when the king allowed them to proceed to Boussa, where, on the 1st April, Clapperton inspected the scene of Mungo Park's disaster. Crossing the Niger, they now travelled without mishap through Nupé, Yauri, and Zaria to Kano, which was entered on the 20th July, barely two years from Clapperton's former visit, in which time he had completed a circular journey by land and sea of close on twelve thousand miles. The place had undergone a change; Kano was in low spirits, since Sultan Bello was at war with his neighbour the Sultan of Bornu, and the trade of the Western Soudan was paralyzed.

After spending some time in Kano, a move was made towards Sokoto, in order to deliver Bello's presents in person, and on the 15th October the great Sultan was interviewed in his war-camp, near Coonia, the capital of Gober. Coonia, which was quite a small walled town, was about to be attacked by Bello's army, and on the following day, Clapperton had an opportunity of witnessing the operations, his description of which is of considerable interest:—

“The number of fighting men brought before the town could not, I think, be less than fifty or sixty thousand, horse and foot, of which the foot amounted to more than nine-tenths. For the depth of two hundred yards, all round the walls was a dense circle of men and horses. The horse kept out of bow-shot, while the foot went up as they felt courage or inclination, and kept up a straggling fire with about thirty muskets, and the shooting of arrows. In front of the Sultan, the Zegzeg troops had one French fusil; the Kano forces had forty-one muskets. These fellows, whenever they fired their pieces, ran out of bow-shot to load. All of them were slaves; not a single Fellatah had a musket. The enemy kept up a sure and slow fight, seldom throwing away their arrows

until they saw an opportunity of letting fly with effect. Now and then a single horse would gallop up to the ditch, and brandish his spear, the rider taking care to cover himself with his large leather shield, and return as fast as he went, generally calling out lustily, when he got among his own party, 'Shields to the wall!' 'You people of the Gadado, or Atego,' &c., 'why don't you hasten to the wall?' To which some voices would call out, 'Oh! you have a good large shield to cover you!' The cry of 'Shields to the wall' was constantly heard from the several chiefs to their troops, but they disregarded the call, and neither chiefs nor vassals moved from the spot. At length the men in quilted armour went up 'per order.' They certainly cut not a bad figure at a distance, as their helmets were ornamented with black and white ostrich feathers, and the sides of the helmets with pieces of tin, which glittered in the sun, their long quilted coats of gaudy colours reaching over part of the horses' tails and hanging over the flanks. On the neck, even the horse's armour was notched, or vandyked, to look like a mane; on his forehead and over his nose was a brass or tin plate, as also a semicircular piece on each side. The rider was armed with a large spear; and he had to be assisted to mount his horse, as his quilted coat was too heavy. It required two men to lift him on; and there were six of them to each governor, and six to the Sultan. I at first thought the foot would take advantage of going under cover of these unwieldy machines; but, no, they went alone, as fast as the poor horses could bear them, which was but a slow pace. They had one musket in Coonia, and it did wonderful execution, for it brought down the van of the quilted men, who fell from his horse like a sack of corn thrown from a horse's back at a miller's door; but both horse and man were brought off by two or three footmen. He had got two balls through his breast; one went through

his body and both sides of the tobe, the other went through and lodged in the quilted armour opposite the shoulders.

“The cry of ‘Allahu Akber,’ or ‘God is great,’ was resounded through the whole army every quarter of an hour at least (this is the war-cry of the Fellatahs); but neither this, nor ‘Shields to the wall,’ nor ‘Why don’t the Gadado’s people go up?’ had any effect, except to produce a scuffle amongst themselves, when the chiefs would have to ride up and part their followers, who, instead of fighting against the enemy, were more likely to fight with one another. There were three Arabs of Ghadames in the army, armed at all points. Hameda, the Sultan’s merchant, was one. He was mounted on a fine black Tuarick horse, armed with a spear and shield, and Arab musket, brace of pistols, blunderbuss, sword, and dagger. The other two, Abdelkrim and Beni Omar, armed with musket, pistols, sword, and dagger. Abdelkrim was mounted; Omar on foot, who received a ball from the Coonia musket, which carried away his cartouche box, with all his ammunition, early in the attack. The other two, Hameda and Abdelkrim, kept behind the Sultan and Gadado the whole of the action, and always joined lustily in the cry of ‘Allahu Akber.’ Once Hameda asked me, when I was near him, why I did not join in the cry; was it not a good place? I told him to hold his peace for a fool. My God understood English as well as Arabic.

“The most useful, and as brave as any one of us, was an old female slave of the Sultan’s, a native of Zamfra, five of whose former governors she said she had nursed. She was of a dark copper colour. She was mounted on a long-backed bright bay horse, with a scraggy tail, crop-eared, and the mane as if the rats had eaten part of it; and he was not in high condition. She rode a-straddle, had on a conical straw dish-cover for a hat, or to shade her face from the sun, a short dirty white bed-gown, a pair of dirty white loose and wide

trousers, a pair of Hausa boots, which were wide and came up over the knee, fastening with a string round the waist. She had also a whip and spurs. At her saddle-bow hung about half-a-dozen gourds filled with water, and a brass basin to drink out of; and with this she supplied the wounded and the thirsty. I certainly was much obliged to her, for she twice gave me a basin of water. The heat and dust made thirst almost intolerable. Numbers went into the shade as they got tired, and also to drink at the river. When it drew near sunset the Sultan dismounted, and his shield was held over him for a shade. In this way we continued until sunset, when the Sultan mounted. We left the walls of Coonia for the camp. Upon the whole it was as poor a fight as can possibly be imagined, and though the doctrine of predestination is professed by Mohammedans, in no one instance have I seen them acting as men believing such a doctrine. The feudal forces are most contemptible; ever more ready to fight with one another than they are with the enemy of their king and country, and rarely acting in concert. During the night we were cut off from water by the inhabitants of Coonia, and a cry was raised that they had come out to attack us, when the whole of the forces of Zamfra, horse and foot, were tumbling over us in our quarter, pell-mell, who should get the soonest out of danger. I had not undressed, but had my horse saddled, and the camels loaded. My servants would have run, too, but I made them stop and load the camels, when I sent them off with those of the Gadado, which now only remained.

“The flags of the Fellatahs are white, like the French, and their staff is a branch of the palm. They are not borne by men of honour, but by their slaves. The Sultan had six borne before him; each of the governors had two. They also all dress in white tobes and trousers, as an emblem of their purity in faith and intentions.”

We have quoted thus at length to show what the fighting qualities of the great Fulah army were when its organization was at its best, and if Clapperton can be considered an impartial witness, it seems little to the credit of the pagan aborigines that they ever permitted themselves to be conquered.¹ In this instance, however, Sultan Bello was worsted, for the Zurmie forces deserted in the night, and the Fulah army fled towards Sokoto, which, after three days' hard marching, was eventually reached in safety, on the 20th October, 1826. Here Clapperton took up his residence, being joined a few weeks later by his servant, Richard Lander, who had been left ill at Kano. From this time Clapperton's health commenced to fail, and his wish to proceed to Bornu being thwarted by Sultan Bello, he remained inactive at Sokoto and Magaria, until he eventually died on the 13th April, 1827, with some appearance of having been poisoned.

Lander buried his master at the village of Jungavie, and had a hut built over the grave, after which, but not without considerable difficulty, he obtained permission from Bello to start for the coast. Leaving Sokoto in May, he marched by a somewhat circuitous route to Badagry, which he reached on the 21st November. Here, however, his troubles did not end, for before he could get a passage to England, he found himself denounced to the king by some Portuguese slave-merchants as a spy, with the result that he was seized, and condemned to go through the ordeal of drinking *sassa-water*.² "On entering," he says in his journal, "one of the men, presenting me with a bowl, in which was about a quart of a liquid much resembling water, commanded me to drink it, saying, 'If you come to do bad it will kill you; but if not,

¹ It must, however, be remembered that the Fulahs always owed their superiority to their cavalry, which could be of little use in the attack on a walled town.

² *Vide* Chapter XVII.

it cannot hurt you.' There being no resource, I immediately, and without hesitation, swallowed the contents of the bowl, and walked hastily out of the hut, through the armed men, to my own lodgings, took powerful medicine and plenty of warm water, which instantly ejected the whole from my stomach, and I felt no ill-effects from the fetish. It had a bitter and disagreeable taste, and I was told almost always proved fatal." From this time the natives of Badagry treated him with every respect, and, after a sojourn of two months, he succeeded in getting a passage to England, arriving safely, with all Clapperton's papers, on the 30th April, 1828.¹

The death of Clapperton and his companions checked for a while the ardour for discovering the course of the Niger. So far the ill-omened river had swallowed up almost every Englishman who had gazed on its waters, and where it terminated remained still a mystery. The information that had been obtained from the natives was unreliable, some asserting that the river flowed from Boussa eastward and emptied itself into Lake Chad, some that it continued its course for several hundred miles and eventually entered the Nile, while others maintained that it was identical with the Congo. As a matter of fact the actual mouths of the Niger had been the resort of the European slave-traders for many years, though that these were the outlets of Park's river was unknown and undreamt of. It seems strange, when looking at the map nowadays, that there should have been any doubt in the matter, but a visit to the Niger Delta soon accounts for everything. The mass of water does not, as with most great rivers, flow in one channel larger than the others to the

¹ While Clapperton was on this expedition, Major Laing had crossed the Sahara from Tripoli to Timbuctoo, which he successfully reached, the first European to enter the mysterious city; he was, however, murdered on his return journey, and all his papers were lost. *Vide* Chapter X.

sea; but, at a distance of sixty miles or so from its termination, divides its waters to form several streams of almost equal size.¹ There was nothing, therefore, to point to the fact that an extraordinarily large river emptied itself into the Atlantic in this neighbourhood. Geographers were sorely puzzled, and the Niger for a time shared with the North Pole the honours of being the problem of the age.²

Disheartened at the ill-success that had attended their efforts to open up these regions, the British Government thought no more of African expeditions, until Lander, who had fed his enthusiasm by publishing the story of his journey with Clapperton,³ persuaded the authorities to commission him to proceed again to Boussa, and take up the thread where Park had dropped it. It may, perhaps, be interesting to say a word about Richard Lander, for that a man in his position should have become a worthy successor to such intrepid explorers as Park and Clapperton is indeed remarkable. He was born in 1804, his father being a Cornish shopkeeper, blessed with a family of six children and a small income. At the age of eleven Richard started life as page-boy to a merchant in the West Indies, after which he served various masters in South Africa and England, having, by the time he took service with Clapperton, travelled through most

¹ *Jeremy Collier* (1688) says of the Niger: "This is the greatest river of Africa, called by the natives Hind-Nijar. It ariseth in Æthiopia, from a lake of the same name, and, running westwards, divides Nigritia into two parts. After a long course, and the reception of divers rivers, whose names are unknown to us, it falls into the Atlantick Ocean by six great streams, which are all south of Cape Verde but one."

² Reichard (1802) and Macqueen (1829) guessed the true course of the Niger.

³ *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa, from the Bight of Benin to Soccato, by the late Commander Clapperton, of the Royal Navy. To which is added The Journal of Richard Lander, &c., London, 1829.*

of the countries of Europe, and seen a good deal of the world. In this manner he picked up the only learning he possessed, though that it was sufficient for the purpose is proved by the good work that he accomplished. Had he been an ordinary man of his class, he would have delivered over his master's papers, received his wages, and foresworn Africa for ever. Richard Lander, however, was of sterner stuff; he, like Park and Clapperton, had received a Niger baptism; his mission was to endeavour to solve the problem of the great river, and at the end of 1829 he had come to terms with the Government, who were only half-hearted in the matter—they would not expend any large sum on the new enterprise, in fact, they limited the expedition to Lander and his brother.¹

The two brothers, Richard and John, soon made all arrangements, set sail from England, and arrived at Badagry on the 22nd March, 1830. Thence they journeyed inland, by the route which Richard had followed on his previous visit, finally striking the Niger at Boussa, without mishap, in July. Fortune favoured them still further, for the king of Yauri, having consulted the oracle, gave them two canoes and a score of slaves as paddlers, with which on the 30th September they commenced their down-stream voyage. Week succeeded week, as the dug-outs slowly drifted along in a south-easterly direction; occasionally other canoes were seen, but no one molested them, and as each morning broke they hoped to see the river widening to the ocean. At length, on the night of the 25th October, they found themselves descending more rapidly; a great river (the Benué) was flowing in from the east, and their course was changed

¹ The parsimony of the Government seems almost incredible. The terms agreed on were that Richard Lander's wife should receive an allowance of £100 during the first year of her husband's absence, and that on his return he should be paid a reward of £100 for his services. John Lander gave his services free, the Government refusing him any remuneration.

to almost due south. There was no longer any question as to where the "Dark Waters" would enter the Atlantic, and a month later the explorers were on board an English vessel at Brass. Thus, after an interval of a quarter of a century, was Park's work completed, and the mystery that had troubled the world for so long set at rest for ever.

We now enter on a new phase of Niger history. The explorers had performed their part, in so far that they had found out that the river was of immense size and that its banks were densely populated. It remained therefore for traders and philanthropists to open up the country, and the expeditions of the next few years endeavoured to establish friendly relations with the people, in the hopes of inducing them to permit free intercourse with Europeans.

The Landers, in describing their adventurous journey,¹ so impressed their countrymen with the immense resources of the new land, that, within a year of their return, the first of the trading expeditions had set sail from England. The Government refused to have any connection with the new enterprise, which was a speculation on the part of a Liverpool merchant, and although as regards trade it cannot be said to have proved otherwise than a dismal failure, its originator—Macgregor Laird—lived to see that failure often leads to success. Had hardship not undermined his constitution, his old age might have been cheered by the knowledge that his foresight laid the foundations of England's most prosperous possession in West Africa.² The expedition of

¹ *A Voyage down the Dark River*, by Richard and John Lander, 1832.

² Macgregor Laird was born at Greenock in 1808, educated at Edinburgh, and early in life became a partner with his father in an engineering business at Liverpool. This he gave up for African exploration and trade, details of which will be found in the next chapter. Although known chiefly for his great work in connection with the Niger, he busied himself with Atlantic steam navigation,



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1832¹ is famous in Niger history, not so much by reason of its being the first of its kind, as because, although it was equipped in the most lavish style, it established for the Delta a reputation for unhealthiness which it has never been able to shake off. The two vessels destined for this eventful undertaking were appropriately named the *Quorra*² and the *Alburkah*,³ and, with forty-eight Europeans on board, they reached the mouth of the Niger in August, 1832. Macgregor Laird himself was with the expedition; Richard Lander also gave his services, while among the principal officers may be mentioned Lieutenant William Allen, R.N., and Dr. Oldfield. The two vessels set to work to explore the various creeks of the Delta, in doing which several weeks were spent, resulting in the decimation of the crews from malaria. At length the main river was ascended, though, owing to the low state of the water, much inconvenience was experienced from frequent grounding on sand-banks, and, with the exception of exploring the Benué river for a short distance, little was done this year.

The expedition returned to the sea, and, after reuniting at Fernando Po, reascended the Niger, when they succeeded in reaching Rabba on the Middle Niger and Panda, or Funda, on the Benué, but so far they had done nothing in the way of trade. Again Fernando Po was visited, and Laird returned to England, and in 1834, for a third time, the great river was ascended by Oldfield and Lander, but without any further result. The officers and crews of the

and the company which he formed in 1837 was the pioneer of the lines to America.

¹ *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa by the River Niger in the steam-vessels "Quorra" and "Alburkah,"* by Macgregor Laird and R. A. K. Oldfield, London, 1837.

² The Niger above Lokoja.

³ "Blessing" (*Hausa*). This was the first iron vessel that performed a sea voyage.

Quorra and *Alburkah* had gradually succumbed to the effects of the climate, and the captains' determination had at last given way, but only because it was no longer possible to navigate the vessels. Of the forty-eight Europeans who had left Liverpool two years before, only nine were alive; of the officers Laird, Oldfield, and Allen alone survived; Richard Lander, who had borne all the trials of the expedition with great fortitude, met his death at the hands of the natives, being mortally wounded in the third ascent of the river, and dying at Fernando Po on the 2nd February, 1834.¹ Thus, on this African island, fate decreed should be buried Clapperton's two fellow-travellers; for Denham, who had given up African exploration after returning from Clapperton's first expedition, had been appointed Governor or Superintendent of Fernando Po, where he died in 1830, at the moment when Lander was solving the mystery of the Niger's mouth.

The results of this expedition as far as trade was concerned were most unsatisfactory; in its principal object it had therefore failed, and failed signally. But it had been a success in other ways; the Delta and the main river had been explored, and Lieutenant Allen had made a chart of the waters; moreover, much had been learned (unfortunately from bitter experience) of the climate of the lower reaches of the Niger, thus paving the way for future expeditions. Utterly disheartened by Laird's failure, English traders abandoned, for a time, the idea of making money out of this part of West Africa by legitimate commerce. In the meanwhile, however, Mr. Beecroft, who was then Superintendent at Fernando Po, devoted his attention to exploring the various mouths of the Niger, ascending the Niger itself as far as the confluence, in 1835, in a steamer of the West

¹ A statue of R. Lander stands in Lemon Street, Truro, his native town.

African Company (the *Quorra*), and again in 1840, in a vessel belonging to Mr. Robert Jamieson of Glasgow, when he reached a spot within forty miles of Boussa. The accounts which he sent home awakened the interest in Mungo Park's river, and the matter was taken up by philanthropists eager to suppress the slave-trade. With this new movement was associated the name of Thomas Fowell Buxton—the Friend of Africa—and to his untiring advocacy was due the fact that money was freely subscribed by private individuals and voted by Parliament to fit out an expedition for the purpose of reclaiming the savage. This was to be no speculative trading venture, but a Government expedition, intended to open up the country and endeavour to induce the natives to substitute commerce for the inhuman traffic in slaves. Such was the idea of the famous expedition of 1841,¹ and if money could have insured its success, it should have been pre-eminently successful. Three steamers, the *Albert*, the *Soudan*, and the *Wilberforce*, were fitted out regardless of expense, officered by the Royal Navy, provided with missionaries, linguists, and gentlemen of various scientific attainments, and despatched from our shores in May, 1841, with the good wishes and prayers of the whole British nation.

The principal officers associated with this expedition were Captains H. D. Trotter, Bird Allen, and William Allen of the Royal Navy; Surgeons McWilliam, Marshall, Pritchett, Thomson, and Nightingale; Rev. J. F. Schön and Mr. Samuel Crowther,² missionaries; Dr. Vogel, botanist.

¹ *A Narrative of the Expedition sent by Her Majesty's Government to the River Niger, in 1841*, by Captain W. Allen, R.N. (1848). *Journals of the Rev. J. F. Schön and Mr. Samuel Crowther* (1842). *Medical History of the Expedition to the Niger*, by Dr. McWilliam (1843). *A Private Journal kept during the Niger Expedition*, by W. Simpson (1843). Article in *Bentley's Magazine*, 1843, by Duncan, &c.

² A freed slave, afterwards Bishop of the Niger. *Vide* Chapter XX.

Dr. Stanger, geologist; and several mineralogists and naturalists. Of Europeans there were altogether 145 and of natives 133, all men specially selected and of proved ability. No stone was left unturned to make this expedition the success of the age, and the instructions to the commanders were embodied in a voluminous despatch, framed to meet every possible emergency. The chief object was the suppression of the over-sea slave-trade, and the commissioners were instructed to endeavour to persuade the various chiefs of the advantages to be derived from commerce and free labour; to make treaties, give presents when necessary, and to purchase land for the erection of forts. Moreover, they were empowered to make arrangements for the purchase of a tract of land sufficiently extensive for occupation as a model farm, all necessary agricultural implements being sent out with the expedition. Finally, the members of the expedition were forbidden to trade with the natives, it being considered that to do so might frustrate the main objects for which it was despatched. It was well known that the greatest danger likely to be encountered would be the climate, and every precaution was taken for the preservation of health; a set of regulations was issued to each vessel, and nothing seems to have been forgotten—even respirators were provided for any of the white crew who should be forced to come on deck at night-time.

Although the three steamers left England in May, they did not reach the Niger mouth until the middle of August, having stopped at the various African islands and at most of the ports on the West Coast, for the purpose of obtaining fuel: thus the river was entered within a month of the worst season of the year, and the fourth death since leaving England occurred on the first day in Niger waters. From that time malaria of the most malignant type raged on board the vessels,

though the officers manfully carried out their instructions in the matter of interviewing the native chiefs and making treaties, which in reality proved of little value. From the Attah of Iddah a plot of land six miles long by four miles wide at the confluence¹ of the Niger and Benué was obtained, whereon to establish the model farm.² On the arrival of the expedition at the confluence about the middle of September, the agricultural implements were unloaded, and the party intended to commence the farming operations was landed; all the previously-arranged details were carried out to the letter; huts were built, the ground cleared and planted, and, with a steam-launch left in charge for emergencies, Captain Trotter considered that this part of his programme had been thoroughly well performed. The little settlement was now left to its own devices, while the expedition proceeded to explore the coast line and the Middle Niger. Death had, however, already commenced to play havoc with both Europeans and natives, and it was found necessary to send one vessel back to the sea with the sick, many of whom only lived to find a last resting-place by the side of former Niger explorers in the cemetery of Fernando Po.

Commander W. Allen, whose former experience of the river should have given great weight to his opinions, strongly advocated the return to the sea of the whole expedition. He was however, overruled by Captain Trotter and Commander Bird Allen, who were both unwilling to abandon the enterprise after so short a trial, and accordingly the *Albert* proceeded up the Middle Niger, while the *Wilberforce* was

¹ Now Lokoja.

² The land in question was ceded by the Attah "to his sister, the Queen of England," but, after the return of the expedition to England, the British Government declined to ratify this part of the treaty. The price agreed to be paid was £45.

despatched down stream to explore the coast line. The result is a melancholy tale; the *Wilberforce* (Commander W. Allen) made for Fernando Po, where on 1st October she met her companion, the *Soudan*, and where the little grave-yard—already well filled with Niger victims—received the remains of several of her crew. Before leaving for a sea voyage Commander W. Allen commissioned Mr. Beecroft to conduct an expedition up the Niger in the *Ethiope*, a trading steamer belonging to Mr. Robert Jamieson, for the relief of the *Albert*; and the *Soudan*, whose crew had now somewhat recruited its strength, was also instructed to reascend the river for a similar purpose. The *Ethiope* left Fernando Po on the 7th October, and met the *Albert* coming down stream at Stirling Island on the 13th, the *Soudan* joining the two vessels at the Nun mouth on the 16th. The *Albert* had ascended the Middle Niger to Egga, but her crew had suffered so terribly from the climate that, but for the timely arrival of the *Ethiope*, it is doubtful if she could have made her way to Fernando Po. The *Wilberforce* had already started on a cruise, and the *Albert* and *Soudan*, having buried their dead, and invalided home Captain Trotter and others, followed suit.¹ For six months the three vessels visited Ascension and other islands, and then Captain W. Allen (now in command of the expedition) assembled them at Fernando Po to arrange future plans. It was generally agreed that some further attempt should be made to carry out the instructions that had been given them on leaving England, though it is very apparent from the various accounts that have been published that a return to the Niger was not by any means popular. Be that as it may, Captain W. Allen decided to attack the pestilential river again,

¹ Captain Bird Allen died on 25th October, 1841, and was buried at Fernando Po.

though fortunately despatches arrived from England in the nick of time ordering the expedition to abandon everything. The model farm, however, was to be relieved, and with this intention the *Wilberforce* was sent up to the confluence, while the rest of the expedition returned to England.

The voyage of the *Wilberforce* (under Lieutenant Webb) up to the confluence and back took twenty-six days, and resulted in the death of two out of the eight Europeans on board. The model farm was found to be in a miserable state, the black labourers having become mutinous, and the little party having suffered from the attacks of the Fulahs. It was, therefore, considered advisable to finally abandon the settlement, and the stores and colonists were removed. This having been done, the vessel returned to Fernando Po, and eventually reached Plymouth in November, 1842. Thus ended the most unfortunate expedition in Niger history; the three steamers had averaged fifty days in the river, and had lost forty-nine Europeans out of a total of 145; the cost had been £80,000, and the results had been practically *nil*. Never have the dreams of African philanthropists received a ruder awakening.

Nothing but failure appeared to dog the steps of expeditions from the south, and for almost a decade the Niger was forgotten, though Beecroft¹ was still quietly pursuing his

¹ Beecroft was born near Whitby in 1790, and entered the merchant service when quite young. Taken prisoner by the French in 1805 escaped and was recaptured four times; retained a prisoner until 1814. Accompanied Sir E. Parry to Davis Straits, reaching Discoe, 70° N. In 1829 accompanied Colonel Nicolls to Fernando Po, for the suppression of the slave-trade, remaining there for twenty years. He made remarkable explorations of the Niger mouths and adjacent countries from 1835 to 1850. In 1842 he explored the Old Calabar River for 200 miles up stream; 1843, made Spanish Governor of Fernando Po; 1845, explored the Niger and the Gaboon; 1850, became H.B.M.'s Consul at Fernando Po, where he died in June, 1854.

investigations. Then once more came a revival, and the British Government again decided to assist in opening up Central Africa—a decision which, as it proved, was instrumental in adding to the Empire half a million square miles of valuable territory.





CHAPTER X.

THE TRAVELS OF BARTH AND BAIKIE.

SLOW, tedious, and expensive both in lives and in money had, so far, been the exploration of the countries of the Niger. Little had been done in this first half-century to open up commercial relations with the natives; the information collected during the fifty years was, however, sufficient to prove that there was a real future before these regions, if means could only be found to bring home to the people the advantages to be derived from intercourse with non-slave-trading Europeans. It remained for the two subsequent expeditions—one from the north and one from the south—to finally complete the work that had been begun, and to add considerably to the knowledge of the interior.

The first of these expeditions was entrusted to Mr. James Richardson, and with him were associated two German gentlemen, Drs. Overweg¹ and Barth,² the latter, on the death of his two companions, eventually succeeding to the command. The expedition was fitted out at the expense of the British Government,³ much on the same lines as the first

¹ A Prussian geologist.

² Heinrich Barth was born in Hamburg in 1821; died 1865.

³ The fact that Barth was a German has been put forward as a claim that Germany had a right, by priority of exploration, to certain parts of the Western Soudan. This can best be dispelled by quoting the words of the distinguished traveller: "After Mr. Richardson had in March, 1851, fallen a victim to the noble enterprise to which he had devoted his life, Her Majesty's Government honoured me with their confidence, and in authorizing me to carry out the objects of the expedition, placed sufficient means at my disposal for the purpose."

of Clapperton's expeditions; in fact, Richardson was directed to follow Clapperton's route, and accordingly the little party left Tripoli in March 1850, and travelled south to Murzuk. Thence they crossed the desert to Air, or Asben, arriving at Tagelel in the following January. They had thus followed the caravan route which traverses the desert almost parallel to, but considerably to the west of, that taken by Denham and Clapperton. It was an arduous journey, and one fraught with much danger and many difficulties, the country being infested by lawless bands of Tuareg robbers, ever on the lookout for plunder, but the little expedition was well-armed and able to resist attack, though frequently robbed under cover of darkness. At Tagelel the members of the mission decided to separate, their finances being at a low ebb, and it being known that where a party of three Europeans travelled together large sums were extorted by the natives, whereas single travellers were allowed to pass through the country without much notice being taken of them. Each of the three travellers had assumed Arabic names, in order to ingratiate themselves with the Mohammedans; thus Richardson was known as Yacub, and Barth as Abdul Kerrim; they, moreover, were dressed as Arabs, and Barth not unfrequently was taken for one, though he never attempted, when questioned, to disguise the fact that they were Europeans, since any deception, if detected, might have aroused the suspicions of a most suspicious people.

The rendezvous of the party (about the 1st April) was fixed at Kuka, the Bornu capital, whither Richardson proceeded direct, while Barth and Overweg took more circuitous routes.¹ From Tagelel the two Germans travelled together

Again, he says: "In geographical enterprise in general none have done more than the English, while, in Central Africa in particular, very little has been achieved by any but English travellers."

¹ As matters turned out, Barth was the only one of the three who

as far as Tassawa, in company with caravans, and meeting everywhere with hospitality at the hands of the natives. Here they parted, to meet again some four months later at Kuka. The results of the journeys of these three remarkable men have been handed down to posterity in the shape of two valuable literary productions—the journals of Richardson, and Barth's description of his own travels, probably the most complete work of its kind ever published.¹ Richardson, within two months of parting from his companions, unfortunately succumbed to the hardships of the journey and the effects of the climate at Ngurutuwa, on the borders of Bornu, and Barth decided to take upon himself to continue the expedition on behalf of the British Government.

Barth, on leaving Tassawa, proceeded south to Gazawa, whence he found his way to the important town of Katsena. "The immense mass of the wall," he says, "measuring in its lower parts not less than thirty feet, and its wide circumference, made a deep impression upon me. The town (if town it may be called) presented a most cheerful rural scene, with its detached light cottages, and its stubble-fields, shaded with a variety of fine trees; but I suspect that this ground was not entirely covered with dwellings, even during the most glorious period of Katsena."² Here, though hospitably treated, he was forced to remain for ten days, and he considered

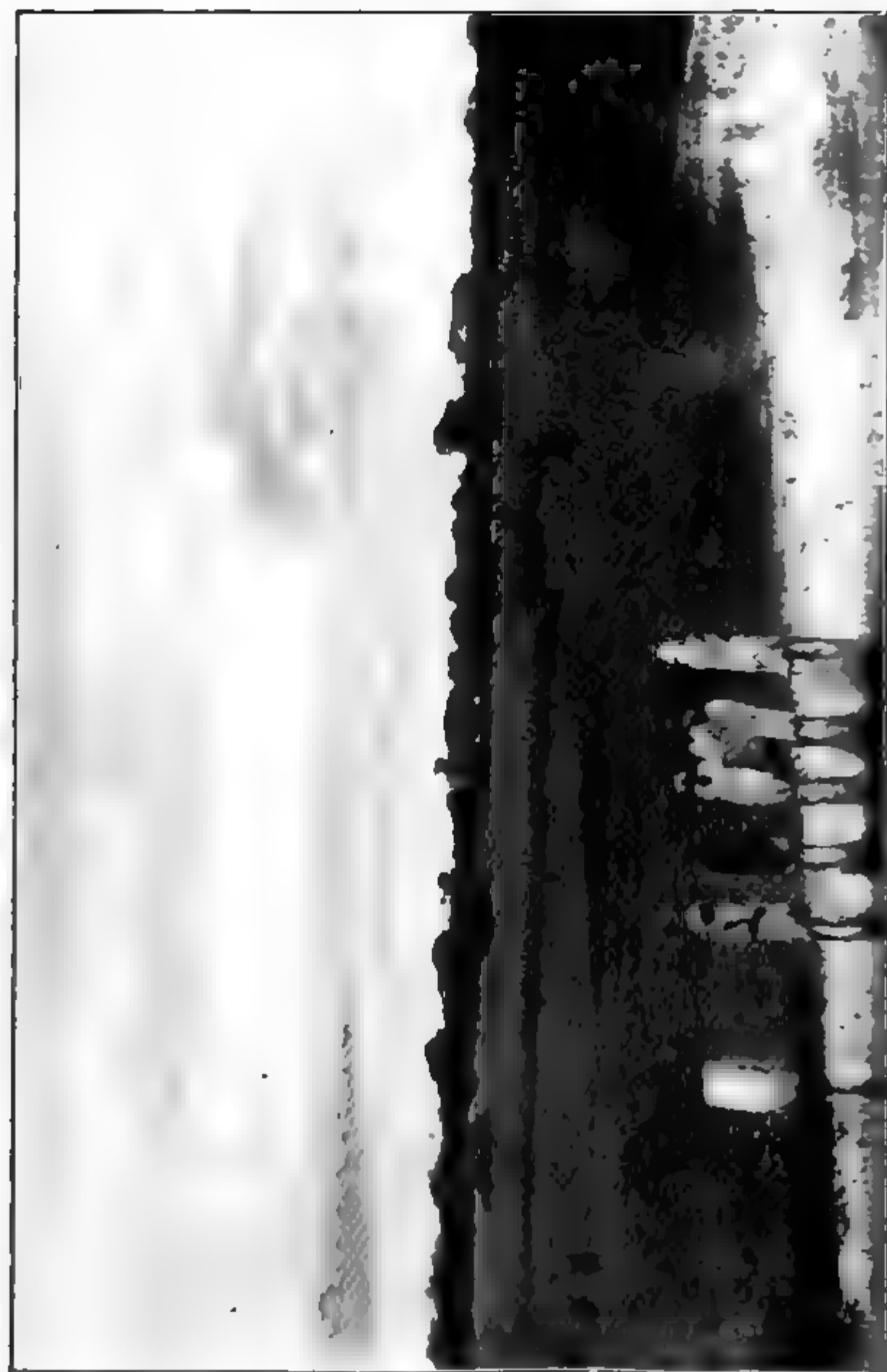
kept his appointment; he reached Kuka on 2nd April. Richardson died *en route*, and Overweg joined Barth at Kuka on 7th May.

¹ *Narrative of a Mission to Central Africa in 1850-51*, by the late James Richardson; two vols. London, 1853. *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa, being a Journal of an Expedition Undertaken in 1849-55*, by Dr. H. Barth; five vols. London, 1857.

² Many villages mentioned by Barth and early travellers have now disappeared; others have changed their places, although retaining their names. Wells frequently run dry in these regions, and it is found easier to move a village to a new water supply than to conduct the water to the old village.

himself fortunate in being granted permission to pursue his journey with so short a detention, since in these parts it is the custom for the governor or head-man to detain his visitors until he has exhausted their stock of presents. The next large town visited was the capital of Hausaland, Kano, where Clapperton had sojourned during each of his expeditions, and Barth has much to say of this great emporium of the Western Soudan, which, during his residence of a month on this occasion, he had full opportunity of exploring. Leaving the Hausa country, he travelled north-east into Bornu, the frontier of which he crossed on the 13th March, 1851, and, after varied experiences, he entered Kuka on the 2nd April.

A vast tract of country had been traversed in reaching the capital of Bornu, and though only a portion of it was unexplored, yet the descriptions of the land furnished by Clapperton had been most meagre, so that to this day Barth has made himself the authority on the country. The reader who takes up the great traveller's five solid volumes cannot fail to be utterly astounded at the amount of information which every page contains, and how any African explorer could have the energy to do a tenth of what Barth did must remain for ever a wonder. His sole idea seems to have been to collect information from the people, and no sooner had he taken up his quarters for the night in a village or town, than he sought out the most intelligent natives and commenced to extract information from them, making copious notes in his journals before going to rest. He became well versed in the Hausa language (the *lingua franca* of the Western and Central Soudan) and in various dialects, while his knowledge of Arabic caused him to be regarded by the more educated Mohammedans as a man of vast learning. His position on reaching Kuka was a trying one, since he had almost exhausted his stock of saleable articles, and for a traveller to



[To face page 101.]

visit any of these countries without being able to give handsome presents to the high officials, places innumerable difficulties in his way. Still, the Sultan and his vizier received Barth with every mark of kindness, and he was enabled to borrow sufficient money with which to provide himself with immediate necessities, as well as to make himself tolerably comfortable in the quarters which had been assigned to him. He now set about the great object of the expedition, and had soon become thoroughly acquainted with the town and its neighbourhood; he visited the shores of Lake Chad, and had already gained a vast knowledge of the country when, on the 7th May, he was joined by his fellow-countryman and colleague.

Overweg, after separating from Barth, had taken a western route towards Sokoto, and in the course of his journey had witnessed the struggles then going on between the pagan inhabitants of Gober and Maradi and the Mohammedan Fulahs. Retracing his steps, he visited the important town of Zinder, and thence proceeded direct to Kuka, without going south to Kano, as he had originally intended. He had suffered considerably from the climate, and his finances were in a worse state than were even those of his companion, yet his energy had not deserted him, and within three weeks of his arrival at Kuka he was sufficiently recovered in health to continue his travels. Barth had long determined to make an excursion to Adamawa (due south of Bornu), and accordingly, on the 29th May, 1851, he left Kuka with a well-equipped caravan, being accompanied for the first day's march by Overweg, who then started with his portable boat to explore the great Lake of Chad.

Adamawa was new ground; no European had yet set foot in the country, and Barth's enthusiasm, as he neared its frontiers, grew unbounded. "We had now," he writes, "reached the border of Adamawa, the country after which I

had been panting so long, and of which I had heard so many interesting accounts, a Mohammedan kingdom engrafted upon a mixed stock of pagan tribes." On the 18th June the Benué River was reached, at the point of its junction with the Faro, and two days later Barth attained the summit of his present ambition and entered Yola,¹ the capital of Adamawa. He had, of course, hoped to spend some time in this interesting Fulah province, and learn something of its history and people; but in this he was bitterly disappointed, for Mahomed Lawl,² the Emir, saw in his visit an attempt on the part of his old enemy, Sheik Omar of Bornu, to gain a footing in Adamawa. It was certainly unfortunate that Barth had come from Bornu; had he come from any other direction, doubtless his reception would have been very different, but, as it was, the Sultan, or Sheik, of Bornu had taken the opportunity in his letter recommending the Christian traveller to the care of Mahomed Lawl, to put forward certain claims to portions of the Adamawa frontier territory. Consequently Barth's visit raised a storm in Yola, and on the 24th June he was peremptorily ordered to quit the place, which he felt bound to do with as good a grace as possible. The return journey to Kuka, which occupied a month, was made wearisome by bad weather, and Barth became much weakened by repeated attacks of fever.

In the meanwhile Overweg had been busily engaged in the exploration of Lake Chad, for which purpose a boat had been brought from England. He visited the numerous groups of islands with which the inland sea was studded, and he made friends with the strange, wild people who inhabited them. But, unfortunately, and as Barth bemoans, he was a traveller without method, and he kept no record of his travels,

¹ Thus named after the royal quarter of Kano.

² Son of Mallam Adama, the original Fulah conqueror of Fumbina and founder of the kingdom of Adamawa, which was called after him.

thus denying to the world the benefits of his vast knowledge of a hitherto unexplored region. His more methodical companion, however, had ample opportunity during the following year of making himself acquainted with Overweg's experiences on Lake Chad, since the two friends from September, 1851, to August, 1852, undertook together a series of expeditions to the eastern states of Kanem, Baghirmi, and the neighbourhood. These interesting journeys were outside of what are now considered the limits of West Africa, and therefore do not come within the scope of this volume, though the master-traveller's description of them is most thrilling. Many a fierce fight did the two plucky Europeans take part in, and many a strange scene did they gaze on, but the pleasure of reading the account of it all is marred by knowing that the last of their many excursions resulted in the death of Overweg. Ever careless of his health, he had gradually become impregnated with malaria, and on the 23rd August, 1852, Barth had the grief and mortification of laying him in his grave by the shores of the Great Lake, in the exploration of which he had devoted so much of his time, indeed at the sacrifice of his life.

The death of Overweg was, as can be imagined, a terrible blow to Barth, and the loneliness of his situation became so appalling, that he determined to at once drown his sorrow in the excitement of a long and arduous journey. Experience had already told him that the eastern countries were too disturbed to permit of his entering them unaccompanied by an armed force; to leave the country and return home by Tripoli, as the Sheik of Bornu tried to persuade him to do, would be to abandon an enterprise which had so far been the greatest success of the century. His mind, therefore, was soon made up—he would proceed west and endeavour to reach Timbuctoo. It was an enormous undertaking, but that was what Barth required, and having formed his plans, he

eventually took leave of the Sheik,¹ and left Kuka on the 25th November, 1852, to commence his memorable journey throughout almost the entire length of the Western Soudan. He was accompanied by eight native servants of various nationalities, and two boys, Dyrregu, a Hausa, and Abbega, a Marghi, who had been liberated from slavery by Overweg, and who are particularly worthy of mention from the fact that they followed their master during all his wanderings of the next two years.² The members of the little party were mostly mounted, the provisions and baggage being borne on camels.

From Kuka, Barth travelled, by Overweg's original route, to Zinder, the capital of the westernmost province of Bornu, and at that time a town of considerable importance.³ There he remained for a month, making various short excursions into the country, and on the 30th January, 1853, set out for Katsena, which he reached on the 4th February. Two years had passed since his previous visit, but he had not been forgotten, which, perhaps, he almost regretted, since all his old friends expected handsome presents. This giving of presents to every one in authority was, and still is,⁴ a great tax on a traveller in these parts, and, as an instance of what was expected in Barth's days, it may be mentioned that he

¹ Barth, on behalf of the British Government, concluded a treaty with the Sheik of Bornu in August, 1852. It may be here remarked that one of the principal objects of the expedition was to make treaties with all the more important native rulers.

² Barth eventually brought them to England and had them educated as Christians, after which they were sent back to their native land, in order that they might assist in spreading the Gospel among the heathens. As events turned out, however, they soon discovered that the knowledge of the world which they had acquired might be turned to more profitable account by trading than by preaching, and consequently they forsook Christianity and embraced Islam. Both became successful traders, and Abbega has long been living in comparative affluence at Lokoja. Vide *Up the Niger*, page 50.

³ Barth called it the "Gate of Soudan."

⁴ Vide *Up the Niger*, p. 299.

considered it necessary to give to the Fulah Governor of Katsena—by no means an exalted personage—the following presents: “a very fine blue bernouse, a kaftan of fine red cloth, a pair of small pocket pistols, two muslin turbans, a red cap, two loaves of sugar, and some smaller articles.” Such gifts to officials are an absolute necessity, and any attempt to curtail them is a false economy, especially where the traveller wishes to make anything like expeditious progress. But, although the amount spent in this way seems excessive, it must not be forgotten that the traveller and his followers are generally boarded and lodged free of expense, so that it may be reckoned that the presents pay not only for the friendship of the natives, but also the hotel bill for an unlimited stay. At Katsena Barth made many purchases of such goods as were likely to prove acceptable presents to the people further west,¹ and having been fortunate enough to arrive in the town while the Ghaladima of Sokoto was there on his annual tour of inspection, he was able to make that officer’s acquaintance and journey with him to Sokoto. Disturbances in the neighbourhood, however, kept the Ghaladima at Katsena longer than he expected, and it was not until the 21st March that the party set out.

The presence of the Ghaladima and his men in the caravan made travelling easy and comfortable, and, on the 31st March, the camp of the Fulah (Sokoto) army, starting on a campaign, was reached. Alihu, Sultan of the Fulahs and Emir el Mumenin, was himself in command of the army, and received Barth with the highest honour and respect, interchanging presents with him, and finally concluding a treaty of commerce with Great Britain. After this interesting interview, Alihu departed on his expedition, and Barth

¹ Chiefly Kano cloth, tobes, and shawls, also native tobacco and leather articles. “No place in Negroland,” says Barth, “is so famous for excellent leather and the art of tanning as Katsena.”

proceeded to Wurno, the residential town of the Sultan, where he took up his quarters in the house of Ghaladima. During his stay of six weeks in Wurno, he paid several visits to Sokoto, and on the return of Alihu, at the end of April, he renewed his acquaintance with that enlightened monarch. From Sokoto the traveller passed to Gando (17th May), and thence to the Niger at Say—a place of importance only because it has chanced to become a landmark in the Anglo-French negotiations recently so much before the public. His travels west of the Niger, though most interesting, cannot be considered as covering ground now within the British sphere of influence; all, therefore, that we need say is that Timbuctoo was safely reached by the adventurer in September, 1853,¹ and left again in May of the following year, during which time, it need hardly be added, the amount of information collected was immense.

Barth retraced his steps towards Kuka, following almost the same route by which he had travelled to Timbuctoo, crossing the Niger at Say, and staying for some time at Gando, Sokoto, and Wurno. His journey was not altogether without incident or excitement, and on more than one occasion his life was in danger, yet, while pursuing his way,

¹ Barth was the third European to enter Timbuctoo; the first was an Englishman, Major Laing (18th August, 1826); the second a Frenchman, René Caillié (1828). As an instance of the manner in which French writers miswrite history, Jules Duval, in his biography of René Caillié, omits all mention of Laing; René Caillié's monument in the cemetery of Pont l'Abbé is inscribed, "the only European who has visited and described Timbuctoo:" while Félix Dubois, in his *Timbuctoo the Mysterious* (1896), says that Barth resided in Timbuctoo for only a month, and saw nothing of the town; as a matter of fact, Barth was at Timbuctoo for *eight* months, and the chapters of his book are sufficient proof that he acquired a vast amount of information about the town. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that M. Félix Dubois was the first European to become thoroughly acquainted with Timbuctoo and its people.

he had received despatches from England which increased his eagerness to push forward to Bornu—Dr. Vogel (a German scientist) and two non-commissioned officers of the Royal Engineers had been sent out from England in 1853 to his relief. His one object now was to reach Kuka and meet his fellow-countryman, but so slow, by force of circumstances, was his progress, that it was not until the 17th October, 1854, that he entered Kano, and it was the middle of December before he was welcomed back to Kuka. He had, however, already met Vogel, who was travelling to Zinder, and on reaching Kuka he found the two English Sappers (Church and Macguire) waiting to receive him. For a month, therefore, Barth enjoyed the society of his new friends, after which the party divided, Vogel and Macguire departing on the 21st January in the direction of Yakoba and Adamawa, while Barth and Church¹ eventually left Kuka on their journey home on the 4th May, arriving in London on the 6th September, 1855.²

Of Barth's explorations it is impossible to speak too highly; never before nor since has a European accomplished such an immense amount of work in this part of Africa, and the mass of information which he collected and published has been proved by subsequent investigation to be absolutely correct, even in the smallest details. The record of his travels is particularly interesting at the present time, as his volumes deal with the more northern portions of Nigeria which are so much under discussion, with reference to the so-called Say-Barua boundary line.³

¹ Church had quarrelled with Vogel, and therefore decided to return to England. Macguire deserted his leader at Yakoba, and was afterwards murdered by the natives. Vogel met the same fate a little later, and none of their papers ever came to light.

² Barth was made a C.B., and received the Patron's Medal from the Royal Geographical Society, who also awarded to Corporal J. F. Church a watch and chain "for his scientific observations."

³ *Vide* Chap. XXI.

While Barth was thus wandering in the Western Soudan, the other expedition with which we are concerned in this chapter had left and returned to England. This, known as the Niger Expedition of 1854, was the first successful undertaking from the south, and as such is a landmark in the story of the great river. Before, however, entering into details about the expedition, it will be well to say something concerning the causes which led to the British Government again turning its attention to the Lower Niger, which for many years it had given up as a useless expenditure of lives and money. So convinced was Macgregor Laird of the value of these regions for purposes of trade, that, ever since his first connection with the opening up of the Niger, he had done all in his power to persuade others to co-operate with him in laying the foundations of this new outlet for British merchandise.¹ Having sunk all his available capital in the disastrous expedition of 1841, he was no longer in a position to continue to carry out single-handed his great project, and he met with little sympathy at the hands either of Government officials or of private individuals.² Still he persevered,

¹ Laird, having obtained in 1852 a contract from the Government, established the African Steamship Company, with a monthly communication with the various ports on the coast as far as Fernando Po.

² The following letter, dated London, 5th December, 1850, was addressed to Mr. Gurney Hoare:—

“DEAR SIR,—I am very unwilling that the coming year, which promises to be such a remarkable one, should pass without some attempt being made to found a permanent, self-supporting intercourse with Central Africa, *via* the Niger. It is now nearly twenty years since I headed the first expedition, under circumstances not at all favourable to success, and from one cause or another I have had no share in the direction of any of those that succeeded it. Time has not deadened my desire to be instrumental in opening out that country, while the information that has been acquired, and the progress of mechanical science, has greatly simplified the *modus operandi*.

“Without going into details, I will briefly state that, after careful consideration, and collecting and comparing all the information that

until eventually his opportunity came. In 1852 news was received from Barth of his journey to Adamawa, and his discovery of the Benué,¹ which he concluded to be the same river as had hitherto been called the Tsadda or Chadda. Here was a new geographical problem, to endeavour to solve which, as well as to "meet and afford assistance" to Drs. Barth and Vogel, the British Government resolved to send out a single vessel. Laird's enthusiasm on matters pertaining to this region, and the fact that he himself had navigated the Niger, at once made him the one man to plan out the proposed expedition, and the Admiralty entered into a contract with him to build and equip a suitable vessel. This was the *Pleiad*, built at Birkenhead by Mr. John Laird, and

has been acquired since I was in that country, I am convinced that, with a capital of £5000, a paying trade with Central Africa, between Rabbah and the sea, can be established with a screw-steamer making an annual voyage from England between the months of May and November.

"I had intended to have done this myself, but, small as the capital is, it is too much for me alone this year, and I have a great objection to co-partnership in such undertakings—indeed, I am convinced nothing but individual energy and economy can establish the trade on a sound basis.

"I have tried in vain to get some friends who are on the Coast to take up the interior; they are as apathetic as they were in 1832; under these circumstances it has occurred to me that you might be inclined to do it yourself, or you may have some friend who would enter into it, in which case it would give me great pleasure to hand you over the whole of the data on which I formed my calculations of success, and bid you or your friend God-speed in the enterprise.—I remain, yours very truly, MACGREGOR LAIRD."

¹ "The word belongs to the Batta language, where water is called *beé* or *bé*; but in kindred dialects it is called *bi*. *Nuúé* means 'the mother,' and the whole name means 'Mother of Water.'—*Barth*. The earlier English travellers, imagining that it flowed into or from Lake Chad, called it Chadda, or Tsadda; Laird called it Shari, confusing it with the river of that name which feeds Lake Chad; the native names are: Etshi (Bonu), Furoji (Nupé), Baki u'Rua (Hausa), Ehaloji (Igbira), Nu (Kurorofa), Ujimini dudu (Igara).

fitted out with all care for the peculiar service for which she was destined.

The command of the expedition was given to Mr. Beecroft, who was to join at Fernando Po, while the other Europeans consisted of Dr. William Balfour Baikie, R.N.; Mr. D. J. May, second master; Mr. J. T. Dalton, zoologist; Surgeon T. J. Hutchinson; T. C. Taylor, sailing-master; and seven others. The remainder of the crew were natives, fifty-four in number, and so well was everything arranged and carried out that all the Europeans on board the *Pleiad* returned to England little the worse for their voyage. Experience had taught Mr. Laird that the failures of previous expeditions had been due principally to climatic influences which it was quite possible to avoid. He therefore decided that it was desirable that the vessel should enter the river during the rainy season, and accordingly she started on her voyage on the 20th May, 1854.¹ Two other points are noticeable about this expedition; first, that the number of white men employed was kept as low as possible, while all the heavy work was done by the black crew; second, that quinine was freely used as a preventive of fever.² The primary object, at any rate as far as the Government was concerned, was the exploration of the Binné and the relief of Barth, but by his contract Mr. Laird was also permitted to carry on trade with the natives whenever opportunity offered, so that the *Pleiad* was well stocked with likely goods, and it may be here

¹ *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the Rivers Kicora and Binue, in 1854*, by William Balfour Baikie; London, 1856. *Journal of an Expedition up the Niger and Tshadda Rivers, undertaken by Macgregor Laird, Esq., in connection with the British Government, in 1854*, by the Rev. Samuel Crowther; London, 1855. *Narrative of the Niger, Tschadda, and Benue Exploration*, by T. J. Hutchinson; London, 1855.

² A dose of five grains was administered morning and evening to everyone on board the *Pleiad*.

mentioned that the produce obtained, in exchange for the cargo, realized £2000, which was considered most satisfactory.¹ On arriving at Fernando Po, it was found that Beecroft, the Commander of the expedition, had unfortunately died some time previously; his place was therefore taken by Dr. Baikie,² who determined forthwith to carry out the instructions of the Admiralty and of Mr. Laird.

On the 12th July the little *Pleiad* crossed the bar at the Nun mouth of the Niger, and anchored off Alburkah Island, where she was forced to remain for the next two days while her engines underwent repair. The ascent then commenced, but after a few miles the *Pleiad* ran aground on Sunday Island, and was not afloat again until the 17th; a similar mishap occurred two days later, showing the importance of being provided with good pilots even in such a large river. The navigation now became easier, and Abo was reached on the 21st. Here the expedition remained for three days, interviewed the chief, made friends with the people, and finally, after leaving a native missionary (Simon Jonas) behind, departed with the good wishes of all. A week later they arrived at Iddah, the capital of the Igara country, where they were received in audience by the Attah, whose "state dress consisted of a large figured purple velvet robe, reaching from his neck to his feet; his head-piece was a cap covered with white beads, and having at the sides and in the front tufts of fine feathers, the latter projecting over

¹ This did not pay expenses, but the Government afterwards indemnified Mr. Laird, "on the ground that an individual ought not to bear the expense of an exploring voyage chiefly for Government objects."

² It is perhaps remarkable that, in many of these early Niger expeditions, the commander's death necessitated the work being carried out by the next senior; Oudney's expedition was completed by Clapperton; Clapperton's second expedition by Lander; Richardson's by Barth; Beecroft's by Baikie.

his face, so as to prevent a full view of his countenance. Pendant from each ear hung a thin, circular piece of wood, perforated with various devices ; round his neck were innumerable strings of beads, white, blue, and yellow, and against his breast was a large brass plate, closely resembling the sign of an insurance office. In his left hand, which peeped from under his ample sleeve, was a hollow brass tube, attached to which were numerous little bells. A similar article rested on his lap, while on a small mat before him was placed a dilapidated stone-ware 'Souter Johnny.' His Majesty, however, did not prove a very satisfactory person to deal with, though he expressed himself as desirous of opening trade with white men, and anxious to have native missionaries established in his country.

Up to this point nothing of any great importance had occurred, though it was satisfactory to find that the natives of the Lower Niger still retained the good impression of Englishmen which they had obtained from former expeditions ; that they were still anxious to trade, and that they were willing to allow missionaries to settle down amongst them.¹ But the object of the expedition was not the Lower Niger, for its energies were to be directed towards the exploration of the Benué (or, as it was then generally called, the Tsadda), and, therefore, until the site of the old model farm was reached, the work of the expedition can hardly be considered to have commenced. Little was known of this magnificent affluent of the Niger ; it had been navigated by previous expeditions only as far as Dagbo (some seventy miles from the confluence), and although Barth had crossed it hundreds of miles higher up, whence it came, and through what countries it flowed, was still a problem worthy of solution. There was, consequently,

¹ At the request of Mr. Laird, the C.M.S. allowed the Rev. S. Crowther and a staff of native missionaries to accompany the expedition. *Vide* Chapter XX.

as may be imagined, a certain amount of excitement in store for Dr. Baikie and his companions when, on the 7th August, the *Pleiad* began to plough her way up the unknown river. The one great drawback to success was time. It was known that within a few weeks the waters would have fallen to such an extent as to make navigation almost an impossibility, and, owing to the green state of the wood which had to be burned, great difficulty was found in keeping up steam. Progress was necessarily slow; thus, on the first day only six miles was covered: on the second day scarcely as much; but eventually this difficulty was overcome by purchasing dry wood from the villages, which were frequently passed. The people were pagans, suffering much from the constant incursions of the Mohammedan Fulahs, and, being miserably poor, were easily satisfied with the small presents which were given to them by the members of the expedition. Dagbo (the furthest point reached by the *Alburkah* in 1833) was passed on the 18th August, after which the little steamer experienced great difficulty in keeping to the channel; sand-banks were a frequent annoyance, and she was, almost every day, aground for an hour or two. Still she continued her slow ascent, while the opportunity of the frequent stoppages was taken advantage of for petty trading, and to induce friendly intercourse with the natives who crowded down to the banks of the river.

The scenery of the Benué was found to be far grander than that of the Lower Niger, ranges of mountains taking the place of the ever-present swampy flats of the Delta regions; "the neighbouring soil," says Baikie, "teemed with a diversified vegetation, and the frequent recurrence of hill and dale pleased and gratified the eye. Nor was animal life wanting, for from our mast-head we enjoyed the novel sight of a large herd of elephants, upwards of a hundred in number, crossing a little streamlet not much more than a mile from

us." The great beast, in those days, appears to have been fairly abundant, and as an instance of the amount of ivory in the country, it may be mentioned that the *Pleiad* purchased 620 lbs. in one day in the neighbourhood of Zhibu. By the end of September they had ascended two hundred miles above Dagbo, without encountering any resistance from the natives, and on the 25th they paid a visit to the Sultan of Hamaruwa (Muri), the first Fulah state which they had met with. Their reception was most cordial, and they were much struck by the state of civilization in which they found the Mohammedan inhabitants living. No reliable information could be obtained of Dr. Barth, though several native merchants stated that they had heard of a white traveller as having been at various places in the north, so Baikie decided to endeavour to reach Yola as quickly as possible. The water now showed signs of falling, and knowing that, when once it commenced, the fall would be rapid, and that thus the *Pleiad* might not be able to return to the confluence that year, it was deemed advisable to take her no further up stream, but to proceed in the gig. On this adventurous voyage Baikie was accompanied by only one European (Mr. May), but having been led to believe that Yola was only a few miles off, he fully expected to be able to reach that important town, if not to get as far as the Faro River, before being forced to return to the *Pleiad* at Gurowa (the port of Hamaruwa). The boat travelled against the current with all the speed that the oars could drive it, but it was slow work, and it soon became evident that it would be impossible to reach Yola. Two important native villages were passed, Lau and Djin, at both of which the pagan inhabitants were at first disinclined to be friendly, and the travellers began to understand that the novel sight of the steamer had been accountable for the friendship of the tribes on the voyage to Gurowa. The gig was regarded merely as a superior build of canoe, and the Englishmen, at a distance, being easily mistaken for Fulahs—

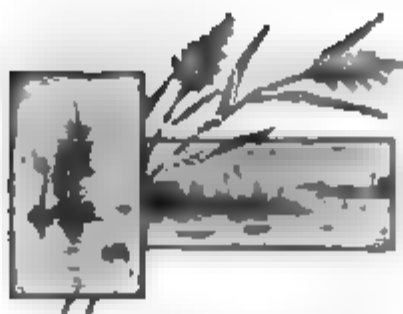
the dreaded foes of all the pagans—the villagers were everywhere prepared to meet an attack. Fortunately, the party was never forced to have recourse to arms, but on reaching Dulti on the third day, the attitude of the natives became so threatening that the gig was obliged to beat a hasty retreat, being pursued down stream by a flotilla of canoes. This was proof enough for Baikie that it was useless attempting any further exploration that year, but as he added some forty miles to the chart of the river, it cannot be said that the voyage was in vain. They returned with the current at a fair speed, and when in sight of Gurowa, were astonished to find that the *Pleiad* had disappeared. This was naturally a bitter disappointment, and they could only conjecture that the steamer had either left to obtain wood, or because the officers imagined that the river was falling. The latter eventually proved the reason, though as a matter of fact, it was quite an unnecessary precaution, for the water was actually at the time rising. Still there was nothing to be done but to row on down the river and overtake the steamer; the Krumen set to work with a will and pulled eighty miles on the first day, finally coming on the *Pleiad* about noon on the second day, high and dry on a sand-bank, where she had been for forty-eight hours.

The voyage back to the sea was without mishap and devoid of any startling incident, the expedition reaching Fernando Po on the 7th November, and England in the following February. Reviewing its proceedings after a lapse of three and forty years, one is rather inclined to underestimate its results. Nowadays such a voyage would be considered almost as a pleasure trip; in 1855 it was regarded as one of the most remarkable pieces of exploration of the age. To compare Baikie's work with Nansen's may seem invidious, if not ridiculous, yet supposing that, a few years hence, the North Pole be discovered, then, in 1940, our children will think no more of Nansen's safe return in the

year of grace 1896 than we do to-day of Baikie's voyage up the Benué. How many Englishmen are there who ever heard of Baikie? How many who could locate the Benué to within a thousand miles? Let us, however, sum up what Baikie did. In the first place, he did what no one before him had succeeded in doing, spending four months in Niger waters without the loss of a single member of his expedition; secondly, he explored and compiled a chart of more than 250 miles of a new river; thirdly, he never fired a shot at a native; fourthly, he was instrumental in opening up an entirely new region to trade; and lastly, he gave to the world a vast store of information on such subjects as ethnology, philology, and natural history; while, with the aid of Mr. Crowther and his staff, he established missionary stations among the pagans, thereby laying the foundations of a new form of civilization. Such were some of the results of the expedition of 1854, and, though it did not succeed in joining hands with Barth, its labours, as we shall see, eventually bore good fruit.



WOMEN OF ZHIBU, BENUÉ RIVER.



CHAPTER XI.

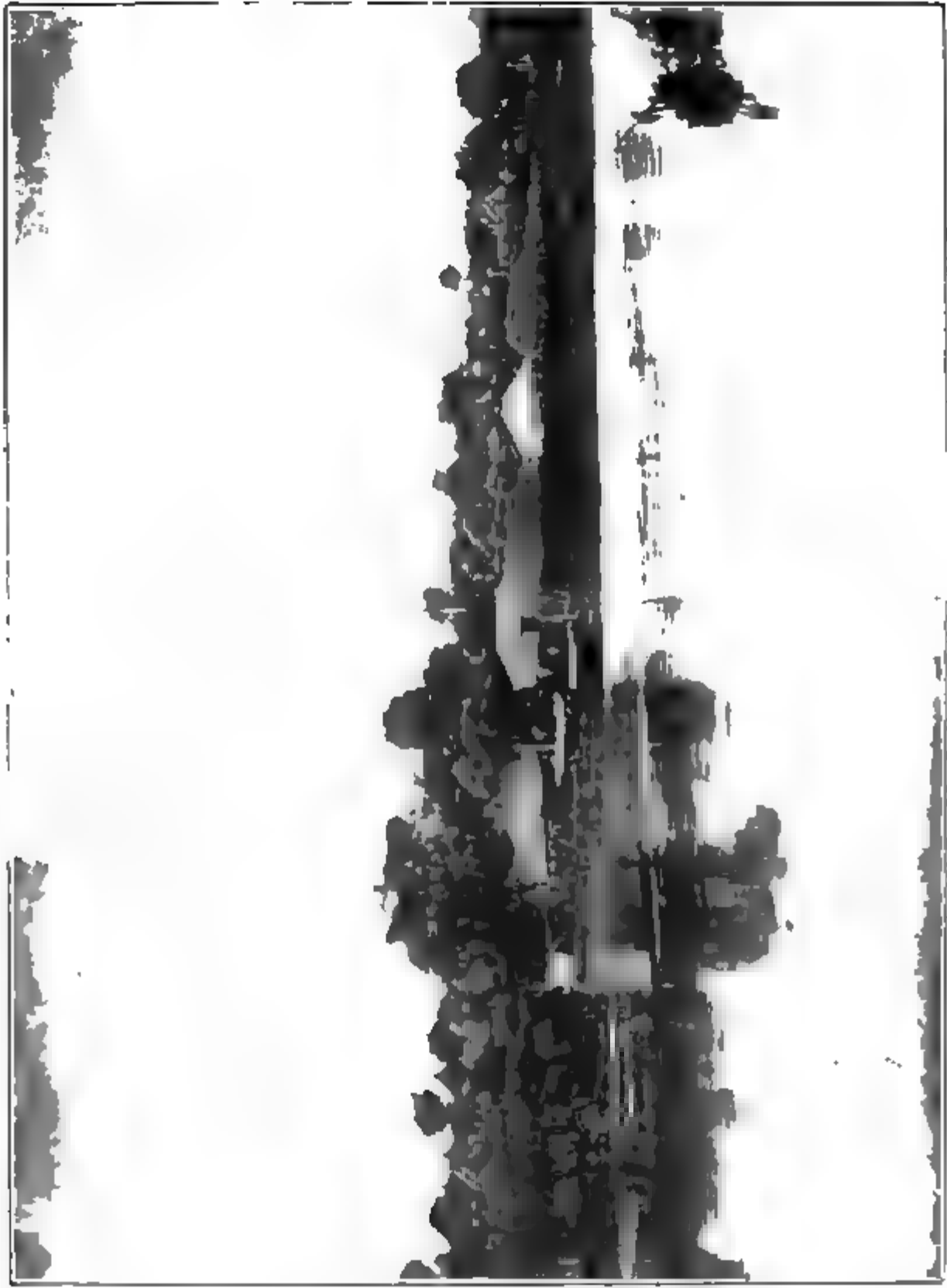
THE COMMENCEMENT OF TRADE ON THE NIGER.

THE explorers' part of the great work of opening up this portion of West Africa was now completed; the capabilities of the country were fairly well known, and it remained only for traders to commence operations, which they lost no time in doing. As an instance of the rapid development of a new land, there is perhaps nothing more interesting in the commercial history of England than the opening up of the Niger River to trade. Forty years ago there was not a single store-shed north of the Delta; to-day the banks of the main river and its branches, to a distance of nine hundred miles from the sea, are lined with trading stations, the property of a British Chartered Company with a capital of £1,100,000. How all this has been brought about requires a little explanation.

It will be remembered that the *Pleiad* had been equipped by Mr. Macgregor Laird partly for trading purposes, and so pleased was this indefatigable gentleman with the results of his enterprise that henceforth he left no stone unturned to develop the trade with this region. British merchants were but half-hearted in the matter, and, although a memorial was presented to Government, it was two years before anything was done, and then, but for the energies of certain philanthropists, the Government would have refused to support any undertaking connected with the Niger. Ever since the lamentable muddle of 1841, ministers dreaded

the very mention of its name, and, after the successful voyage of the *Pleiad*, their hands were sufficiently full with foreign affairs in the East. The Crimean War and the troubles in India gave them plenty to think about without embarking on what they considered a chimerical enterprise in West Africa. But each rebuff only spurred Laird on to greater exertion, and, in 1856, the Government began to listen to his views, which were set forth in a series of voluminous despatches. Finally the Admiralty entered into a contract with him (for five years from the 1st January, 1857) by which he bound himself to place and keep on the Niger River a fully-found iron steamer, to convey up and down the river, and to and from Fernando Po, any passengers whom the Government might name, he to receive in return an annual subsidy which was to commence at £8000, and was to be reduced by £500 per annum afterwards. This was a step in the right direction, and moreover showed that the Government was anxious to open up the Niger; still, the subsidy was far from sufficient to enable Laird to carry out his great scheme, though he did not hesitate to commence fulfilling the terms of his contract. He determined that, come what might, his new venture should have every chance of success, and accordingly, early in 1857, he despatched the *Dayspring* from England with a full cargo of merchandise, and instructions for carrying out his new plans. After careful consideration, he had come to the conclusion that, in order to develop trade with the natives on the river banks, it was necessary to have fixed trading-stations established on shore, and well stocked with the requirements of the people, while the steamers should maintain frequent intercourse between these factories and the sea.

The command of this new expedition was entrusted to Dr. Baikie, whom the Government had appointed Consular



BARBO, MIDDLE RIVER

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Agent at Lokoja, while Lieutenant (afterwards Sir John) Glover, R.N.,¹ and the Rev. Samuel Crowther² were despatched as cartographer and missionary respectively. The *Dayspring*, with a sailing vessel in tow, entered the Niger in July, 1857, and proceeded to carry out Laird's instructions. Three trading stations were established, viz. at Abo, Laird's Port (Onitsha), and at Laird's Town (Gbebe, a little below the confluence), after which the steamer endeavoured to open up the trade of the Middle Niger. In doing this, however, a catastrophe occurred: the *Dayspring* was wrecked on a rock near Jeba, above Rabba (two hundred miles from the confluence), and had to be abandoned, entailing a loss to Mr. Laird not only of the vessel itself, but also of the valuable cargo of shea-butter which she had on board. The unfortunate crew remained on shore at Jeba for a year,³ during which time Glover and a small party visited Boussa and made the overland journey to Lagos.⁴ It was impossible now for Laird to withdraw from the Niger; he had to carry out his contract with the Admiralty as regards steamers, and he had to look after the factories which he had established (at a cost of some £5000) on shore, consequently, in the following year, he equipped two new steamers (£17,000) to proceed to the Niger. These were the *Sunbeam* and the *Rainbow*, the former reaching the river on the 30th June, 1858, and the latter in September of the same year. The *Sunbeam* discharged her cargo at the three factories, and then went on to Rabba for the relief of the crew of the *Dayspring*, who had transferred themselves thither from Jeba. These were brought down to the confluence; the *Sunbeam* loaded up with produce collected at the factories,

¹ *Vide* page 98.

² *Vide* Chapter XX.

³ The sailing vessel returned to England with a full cargo valued at £4000.

⁴ A native servant's account of this and of subsequent events will be found in *Up the Niger*, Appendix I. (C).

and arrived in England in February, 1859, while the *Rainbow* remained in the river for the purpose of carrying out the contract with the Admiralty. The results so far had proved anything but satisfactory; the value of the produce brought down had amounted to barely £3000; the *Dayspring* had become a total wreck, and a further loss of £1600 was incurred by the destruction by fire of the factory at Laird's Port.

Laird had already become aware that the capital which he could afford to put into the business was not sufficient for its certain and rapid development; he therefore set about the formation of a Joint Stock Company, and in May, 1858, issued a prospectus of the "Central African Company, Limited," with a capital of £100,000 in 10,000 £10 shares. The public were invited to subscribe, Laird agreeing to transfer to the Company, from the 1st July, 1858, for the sum of £5000, all his interests in the Niger, and to reserve the management in his own hands. This was not, however, a time when Joint Stock Companies were in favour, and only eighty-one shares were taken up. The accounts kept by Laird between himself and the proposed Company, balanced up to the 31st March, 1859, showed a deficit of some £25,000, which, it will be thought, should have been sufficient to deter an ordinary man of business from attempting to continue what looked like throwing good money after bad. But the reader will have already discovered for himself that Macgregor Laird was no ordinary man, and it was his firm conviction that it required only time and capital to make the Niger trade a highly remunerative one. He, moreover, maintained that the pecuniary loss was more than made up for by the results which, in his report to the shareholders, he enumerated as follows: the wreck of the *Dayspring* was the immediate cause of the establishment of the overland route from Rabba to Lagos, and the residence for a

year of the crew among the natives showed that they were friendly to European traders; the establishment of factories on shore had produced the benefits of legitimate trade, and the opening of mission stations with schools and chapels; while the voyage of the *Sunbeam* to Rabba proved that the river was navigable, for a vessel of 390 tons and drawing nine feet of water, for a distance of five hundred miles from the sea.

In 1859 Laird, having failed to form a company, continued his project single-handed, despatching the *Sunbeam* on her second voyage with cargo, which ultimately realized £8000. At the moment, however, when matters were thus commencing to show an improvement, an unexpected interruption occurred. The natives of the Delta looked on the trading-steamers' visits as an encroachment on their privileges, more especially as they themselves were given no opportunity of trading with the Europeans; accordingly, as the vessels were returning to sea in the autumn of 1859, a heavy fire was opened on them from the banks. Laird reported the circumstances to the Admiralty, and he was promised the convoy of a gun-boat for the following season. Unfortunately the gun-boat did not arrive at the mouth of the river until November, when it was too late to ascend, and Laird's agent deemed it advisable to try to dispose of his cargo among the Delta natives. A friendly palaver with the chief resulted in the establishment of a factory at Angiama (where Lander had been mortally wounded), the natives proving keen traders. Laird now saw a great opening for increased trade, and he came to the conclusion that by placing trading-stations at intervals along the banks of the Lower Niger, not only would they prove remunerative, but the natives would thus be induced to a greater friendship for the white traders. While forming his new plans, and when about to realize his long-cherished dream of success, Macgregor Laird—the father

of British trade on the Niger—unfortunately died.¹ What might have resulted had fate decreed otherwise it is impossible to say; one thing, however, is certain: the death of this great pioneer marked an epoch in the progress of commerce with Central Africa, such as the death of Mungo Park had marked in the progress of discovery. He was a man whose mind was for ever steadily fixed on the future; he overlooked all obstacles which patience and renewed effort could remove,² and had he been spared to continue his work, he would, no doubt, have surmounted every difficulty and taken a foremost place on the roll of the makers of the British Empire. This is no fulsome panegyric, for the outcome of Laird's labours can be seen to-day in the Chartered Company, which forms the subject of a later chapter.

To return to events on the Niger: the fact of the *Sunbeam* being delayed, in 1860, in the Delta, although, as Laird thought, a fortunate circumstance, was disastrous to the factories higher up, but of this he never knew. As the time for the steamers' visit passed, the natives at Abo grew insolent; and when it became certain that they would not arrive, the factory was plundered. To this must be added a further misfortune: the *Rainbow* broke down early in the year, and became useless, thus cutting off all communication between the different factories. British commerce with the Niger was, for the time being, at an end, and it became the duty of Laird's executors to realize his estate by closing his

¹ January, 1861. It must not be imagined that Mr. Laird's sole idea with regard to the development of Central Africa was of a mercenary nature: he had far higher and nobler aims; he was well known as a supporter of missionary enterprise, while his suggestions for the restrictions of the slave-trade, embodied in an able pamphlet, were published only a month before his death. *Vide* Chapter XIX.

² It may be mentioned that the motto of the Laird family is, *Spero meliora*—as far as Macgregor Laird himself was concerned a very appropriate one.

factories, and withdrawing all his property from the river. In July, 1861, the Admiralty ordered a gun-boat to accompany the *Sunbeam* on her final visit to the factories, but, owing to a mistake on the part of the commodore, a vessel of too deep a draught to be of much service was despatched. The gun-boat, however, destroyed the villages, whose inhabitants had taken part in the attack on the steamers in 1859, and then proceeded to assist in dismantling the factories,¹ which was effected without further disturbance, and with the result that the *Sunbeam* returned to England in the spring of 1862 with £5000 worth of produce. Thus ended for a while England's mercantile connection with the Niger.

It may be interesting here to give some particulars concerning the grounds on which Mr. Laird based his calculations for making a profit out of Niger trade. He, of course, hoped eventually to discover new products, but for the first few years he was content to rely on such staple products as palm oil, shea-butter, and ivory, and he knew that the further from the coast he was able to trade the cheaper he could buy these commodities from the natives; thus, whereas in the Delta, a puncheon of oil fetched four and a half tons of salt, at the confluence it could be obtained for four-fifths of a ton; and the same thing applied to every other article of commerce, the main point being the matter of transport. Of the products of the future, Laird regarded cotton as that likely to prove of most value, knowing that it was extensively cultivated in the countries north of the confluence, and fully aware of the enormous consumption of this article in England; in this, however, he was mistaken, for the country only grows sufficient to supply its own wants, and cotton has never as yet become an article of export from the Niger, though it is not by any means certain that, in this as in his other ideas, he

¹ The factory at Onitsha was on the point of being plundered by the natives when the gun-boat arrived on the spot.

may not eventually prove to have shown his foresight, for with a more settled state of affairs in the Western Soudan it is probable that the cotton-producing area will extend enormously. Kano is a great cotton market, and buys up all the produce of the neighbouring countries; moreover, the natives are accomplished weavers, their cotton stuffs being greatly preferred to, and fetching a higher price than, any of our Manchester goods imported into the country. This fact was either overlooked by Laird, or else he imagined that the natives would prefer imported cotton stuffs. Doubtless he was attracted by the prospect of a vast trade in cotton from what he had learned of the success in this direction of a Manchester merchant carrying on operations in the neighbourhood of Lagos (Abeokuta). This merchant (Mr. Thomas Clegg) had provided him with statistics showing the rapid growth of his trade with West Africa, and it appeared that in 1851 (when he commenced) he imported only 285 lbs. of cotton; 1852, fourteen bales; 1853, thirty-seven bales; and so on until 1859, when his importations reached 3500 bales—a bale weighing between 100 and 120 lbs. But the cotton country which Laird hoped to sap differed from that surrounding Abeokuta; in that the former is inhabited principally by Mohammedans wearing much clothing, whereas the natives of the more southern parts are (or were forty years ago) all pagans, with few requirements in the matter of dress. The failure to obtain cotton in any quantity would not, however, have altered his views as to the value of trade with the Niger; there was always a certainty of palm oil and kernels, and there were many other minor products worth exporting, while there were great hopes of discovering the less valuable minerals. All this Laird had thought out, and the world knows now that he was right in most of his calculations.

By the closing of the factories and the termination of the contract with the Admiralty resulting from Laird's death,



WATER, LOWEN NIGER.

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Niger trade was thrown back several years, though in the interval which elapsed before British merchants again turned their attention to the river, much was being done by Dr. Baikie (who still remained at the confluence as Consular Agent) and by the missionaries, who had obtained a firm footing in the country near the old factories, and who continued to carry on their labours after the traders had retired.¹ Baikie's head-quarters had originally been at the factory at Gbebe, a little below the confluence and on the opposite bank of the river to the site of the model farm of 1841; from Gbebe he removed to Odakudu, a little higher up, and then, in 1860, he crossed over to the site of the model farm, where he founded the town of Lokoja. Here with Glover he established a small settlement, principally of ransomed slaves, and, being on the best of terms with Masaba,² Emir of Nupé, and the surrounding pagan chiefs, he gradually induced the natives to cultivate the country round the town and to settle down to peaceful pursuits, while, by learning the Hausa language and encouraging the Hausa traders to frequent Lokoja, he rapidly increased the prosperity of the place. The petty kingdom was a model of good government, and Baikie's influence was felt far and wide throughout the country, so much so that the natives spoke of him as the "king of Lokoja," and there is little doubt that the presence of this little British colony in the heart of Africa did more for the civilization of the negro and for the maintenance of British prestige than it is possible to imagine. Both Baikie and Glover, we need hardly say, were exceptional men, and though their work was confined to a very small area, they did much to smooth the way for the British traders who, a little later, came into the country. Glover lived to perform further services for his country,³ but

¹ *Vide* Chapter XX.

² *Vide* Chapter XV.

³ *Vide* page 98.

Baikie, worn out by the strain on his constitution, died on the passage to England from the Niger in 1864. The life that these men were forced to live at Lokoja is an instance of the pluck and endurance of Englishmen such as is seldom met with. When the contract steamers ceased to run they were entirely cut off from the world; the nearest British settlement was Lagos, the overland journey to which took at least a fortnight, and was beset with difficulties. Their only relief was the occasional visit of a man-of-war, but these could only navigate the river at certain seasons of the year, and the two Englishmen had frequently to subsist on native diet. The arrival of a man-of-war, and later on of a trading steamer, was the occasion for much rejoicing, and a handsome reward was always offered to the first native who brought news to the isolated little consulate of the sight of a steamer's smoke.

One is apt nowadays to imagine that the British Government, after the expedition of 1841, withdrew altogether from supporting the opening up of the Niger; this, however, is not the case, for, as we have shown, the Government contributed towards the 1854 expedition, subsidized a line of steamers in 1857, and maintained Consular Agents at Lokoja until 1868,¹ patrolling the river at intervals with gun-boats. This, it must be admitted, was much for the Government to do from disinterested motives, for, thirty or forty years ago, the idea of annexation and scrambling for African territory had not entered the heads of European politicians. The desire to stamp out slavery probably had

¹ Dr. Baikie was succeeded by Lieut. Bouchier, R.N., after whom the principal Consuls and Vice-Consuls at Lokoja were T. V. Robins, Paymaster Maxwell, W. Fell, J. Edwards, and Lyons McLeod, of whom Messrs. Maxwell and Fell are buried at Lokoja. From 1868 (when the last Consul was withdrawn from Lokoja) until 1884 the British Government did not attempt to exercise, or to lay the foundations for exercising, any *political* influence whatever in Nigeria.

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a good deal more to do with the assistance granted by Government than the desire to develop the country for the British trader, for when it became doubtful if much good was resulting to the anti-slavery cause from a Consular agency at Lokoja, the Consuls were withdrawn for ever, and no further subsidy was granted. The maintenance of this British consulate in the centre of Africa had conferred immense benefits on the natives of the Niger, who had begun to look on Englishmen as their superiors in every respect; even the Mohammedans, whose creed forced them to regard Christians as "Kaffirs" or unbelievers, were greatly impressed by the good work done by the white men, and the visit of H.M.S. *Investigator* and *Rattlesnake* to Lokoja in 1863 was the means of establishing a lasting friendship between Masaba, Emir of Nupé, and Great Britain. The principal object of the despatch of these vessels to the river was to take supplies to Dr. Baikie, but a secondary object was the conclusion of treaties of friendship with various chiefs.¹ At the present day these treaties may seem of some considerable importance, so it will be well to say something about them, though the idea that they were of any *political* value must not be entertained. The first chiefs who were approached on the subject were those of Akassa, who claimed to be owners of both banks of the river at the Nun mouth. They readily signed the treaty, and promised to protect the English flag, which was immediately hoisted. Hence to the confluence all the principal chiefs agreed to form friendly alliances with Great Britain, and finally a treaty of commerce was concluded with the Emir Masaba, who sent a present of a horse to Her Majesty, accompanied by a letter couched in most amicable

¹ *Correspondence on the Subject of an Application from the Company of African Merchants (Limited) for a Subsidy towards establishing Steamers on the River Niger.* Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 23rd June, 1864.

terms.¹ He expressed himself as desirous of establishing regular commerce between his people and English traders, for whom he guaranteed safety within his dominions; while he volunteered to define a boundary within which British law should be administered. This was virtually the last act in which the British Government played any part as regards the Niger, for on the withdrawal of the consuls from Lokoja, thirty years ago, the river passed into the hands of traders, in whose hands for all intents and purposes it still remains, and it is the chronicle of this trading epoch with which we are now concerned.

While Baikie and the native members of the Church Missionary Society were busying themselves in Africa, a movement was being set on foot in England to re-establish commercial relations with the Niger tribes and to continue the great work begun by Laird. In this were associated certain gentlemen well acquainted with West African trade and several of Mr. Laird's friends and relations, amongst whom may be mentioned more particularly Archibald Hamilton.² Experience had shown that what was required to develop the Niger trade was capital, and it was therefore necessary to follow in the footsteps of Laird and endeavour to form a Joint Stock Company, assisted by Government. The first proposed company was "The River Niger Navigation and Trading Company," with a capital of £100,000 in 20,000 £5 shares. Then followed the "Company of African Merchants"³ (with a capital of £400,000, £300,000

¹ None of these treaties conferred any political rights on Great Britain, and the chiefs could, at the same time or subsequently, have entered into similar treaties with any other nation.

² Mr. A. Hamilton delivered, at the Bromley Literary Institute, on the 25th March, 1862, a most interesting lecture on *The River Niger, and the Progress of Discovery and Commerce in Central Africa*.

³ The following were appointed Directors of the Company:—William Dent, Esq., Archibald Hamilton, Esq., A. Castellain, Esq., L. Gruening,

of which was subscribed by the founders) who in 1864 addressed Lord Palmerston on the subject of obtaining a subsidy from the Government. The correspondence relating to the subsidy was published as a Parliamentary paper, and throws a certain amount of light on the jealousies which even then were shown by the Coast merchants towards the establishment of a new trading company. The Company applied for a subsidy such as was granted to Mr. Laird, and backed up its application by a statement of the good results which were likely to accrue from establishing regular steam communication on the Niger. Moreover, the African Aid Society exerted itself to impress on the Government the necessity of maintaining commercial relations with the natives of the river. The Lords of the Treasury, however, refused to entertain the application, affirming that too much public money had already been expended on this object. This refusal was met by a second application from the Company, whose chairman concluded his letter in the following words: "If the hopes, so repeatedly held out to the natives, be not shortly realized by the permanent British mercantile occupation of the country, the Niger districts will either fall into the hands of some other nation, or a deeper gloom than ever will close over Central Africa." On this, Lord John Russell, in spite of numerous memorials from individual trading firms, decided to recommend the grant of a subsidy to the Company. This question of a subsidy is somewhat interesting, especially when we glance at the pros and cons put forward by the various parties concerned. The Company of African Merchants based their appeal chiefly on philanthropic grounds: "to afford the advantages of legitimate commerce to the natives, thereby striking a blow at the slave-trade at its source in these regions, and to afford

Esq., L. Langworthy, Esq., R. Rumney, Esq., and J. Aspinall Tobin, Esq. (Managing Director).

facilities for missionary enterprise in Central Africa, such as have never before existed"; while, to show that they did not desire to misappropriate the subsidy, they offered to keep separate accounts of the trading operations, and to reimburse the subsidy with interest should the trade profits exceed six per cent. The objection on the part of the Government was that to subsidize one particular company would tend to create a monopoly to the exclusion of other British merchants who might desire to take advantage of what Government had already done and trade in the Niger, but this objection, even after considering the memorials of the West Coast merchants, Lord John Russell modified, giving it as his opinion that "the interests of a few private individuals ought to give way to the public good." The principal opposers of the subsidy were the Anglo-African Company,¹ the African Merchants of Bristol,² and the Merchants of London³ and Liverpool⁴ trading to the West Coast of Africa, all of whom presented memorials to Her Majesty's Government, expressing their "surprise and alarm" at the very idea of a company being subsidized to the detriment of private traders. Reading between the lines, it is very evident that this virtuous indignation was nothing more nor less than jealousy, and even to the present day history is repeating itself—as witness the outcry of African merchants when a Charter was granted to the Royal Niger Company.

The "Company of African Merchants" never commenced

¹ *Chairman*, S. Isaac; *Secretary*, H. C. Aldis.

² Messrs. R. W. King, Lucas, Gurger, F. Burford, T. Redway, P. E. V. Clarke, T. Wood, G. Cole.

³ Messrs. Forster & Smith, Banner Bros. & Co., W. Griffith, W. A. Parker & Co., W. W. Blobitt, T. Morgan & Sons, Ford, Fenn, Swan & Co.

⁴ Thomas Harrison & Co., Hatton & Cookson, Tyson, Richmond and Jones, Grant, Murdock & Co., David Clark, Alfred Aspinall, Chas. Horsfall & Sons, Stuart & Douglas, G. J. Cornish.

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operations as such, but by 1865 a desultory form of trade had been started, in which the old Coast merchants endeavoured to take the opportunity of extending their businesses inland, by despatching small steamers up the Niger with goods likely to attract the natives. These remained in the river until their cargoes were bartered for ivory and such other commodities as had a saleable value in England. The competition among the various British traders now became tremendous, each attempting to outbid his fellow, until the natives were complete masters of the situation. They got an erroneous idea of the value of their products, and eventually refused to deal for anything but spirits and guns, so that it seemed as if the opening up of the country to trade was likely to prove anything but an advantage to the civilization of the people. "If this erroneous policy is pursued," wrote McQueen, "then to the latest period of time the central and southern parts of that vast continent are doomed to remain in the same deplorable state of ignorance, degradation, and misery, which has been their lot during the lapse of three hundred years." This deadlock continued for some time, and it is very doubtful if these independent trading concerns—mere roving ventures as they were—were a benefit either to the natives or to the eventual development of commerce. Their sole object was to make money, and they sold arms and ammunition freely, thus giving the people the means for carrying on their interminable tribal wars. It was not long, however, before a better class of trading enterprise was initiated, and among the first important firms may be mentioned the West African Company (of Manchester), Alexander Miller Bros., Mr. James Pinnock, and the Central African Company of London. These firms soon came to the conclusion that they were cutting each other's throats, and so, in 1879, they decided to amalgamate. The United African Company, as they called themselves,

soon altered the tone of affairs; trading stations were erected on land, and business commenced in earnest. The prime mover in all this was Mr. Goldie Taubman¹ (now Sir George Taubman Goldie), who first visited the Niger in 1877. Mr. Goldie Taubman was much interested in African exploration, and, having already travelled in the Upper Nile regions, decided to attempt to ascend the Benué river and strike across the continent to the valley of the Upper Nile. For this purpose he ordered a steam launch (the *Benué*, ninety feet in length) to be built by Yarrow and sent out in pieces, and, in company with his brother—Captain Goldie Taubman, 63rd Regiment—he started for the Niger. Here the launch was put together in a dry dock cut in the bank of the river, but owing to the serious illness of Captain Goldie Taubman, the project of crossing Africa had to be abandoned. It was at this time that Mr. Goldie Taubman (who had some slight interest in the Central African Company) became impressed with the value of the Niger regions to Great Britain, but he at once saw that no headway was likely to be made unless radical reforms were introduced and competition among the British traders put an end to. To him, therefore, was mainly due the amalgamation of the various firms, and, as we shall see when discussing the great company of which he has now become Governor, his foresight and vast abilities have been instrumental in adding to the British possessions in Africa an extensive and valuable tract of country. But the National African Company (formerly the United African Company), powerful as it had become, had no power to monopolize the Niger, and it was not long before the French, ever jealous of British success, turned their attentions to this quarter of Africa, establishing on the Lower Niger two commercial associations, viz. the *Compagnie Française de*

¹ Formerly an officer in the Royal Engineers.

l'Afrique Equatoriale,¹ and the *Compagnie du Sénégal et de la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique*.²

This phase in Niger history is a very important one, for there can be little doubt that these French firms were more or less state-aided, and Gambetta was known to be secretly encouraging an enterprise which might result in France adding to her Colonial Empire the lower portion of the river, as she had already done the upper portion.³ Fortunately for Great Britain the matter never became a question for international discussion, otherwise, in all probability, our Continental neighbours would now be in complete possession of the Niger Territories. The National African Company, having discovered that the foreign interlopers could be bought out, at once decided to raise the necessary money, and, with this view, as well as to be able to obtain a charter from the Government, the capital of the Company was increased to £1,000,000, and the public were invited to subscribe, the result of which was that the French firms, after a little resistance, were given a sum of money and a certain number of shares in the Company to leave the river. Had they been able to foresee subsequent events, they would, doubtless, have refused to accept the bribe offered by "perfidious Albion." As it was, their retirement destroyed for ever all French claims, though some few years elapsed before the British Government decided on taking the only course which could prevent further foreign intrusion into regions which had been discovered, explored, and developed by none others than Englishmen.

¹ Capital £160,000.

² Capital £600,000.

³ *Ibid* Chapter XXI.



CHAPTER XII.

NIGERIA.

THERE is still a certain amount of confusion in the titles applied to the British possessions watered by the Niger River; in the first place there is the Niger Protectorate, then we have the Territories of the Royal Niger Company, and, thirdly, the Niger Coast Protectorate. We have already distinguished one from the other, but it may be well to again impress on the reader that the Niger Protectorate includes the Territories of the Royal Niger Company and the Niger Coast Protectorate. In June, 1885,¹ the British Government proclaimed a protectorate over the Niger districts, from Lagos Colony to the Rio del Rey on the coast, as far as Lokoja on the Niger, and as far as Ibi on the Benué, and furthermore over all such places as might eventually come within the jurisdiction of the National African Company (afterwards the Royal Niger Company). The portion of this vast protectorate administered by the Chartered Company is what we now have under discussion, and we have adopted for it the title of Nigeria, which, though not officially recognized, has become accepted, at any rate by the British public, as one less ponderous than the "Territories of the Royal Niger Company, Chartered and Limited."

Nigeria, then, has a coast line extending from the Forcados River on the west, to the Nun mouth of the Niger on the east,

¹ *London Gazette*, 5th June, 1885; amended afterwards by a further proclamation in the *London Gazette*, 18th October, 1887.

and its boundaries (though at present only partially defined) include both banks of the Lower Niger throughout its course, both banks of the Middle Niger as far as Say, the left bank of the Benué as far as and including Yola, and the right bank of the same river for some miles further up stream. By sphere of influence agreements with France and Germany, Say on the Middle Niger was taken as the north-west point of the British sphere, and from it the temporary boundary lines were drawn, towards the south, to meet the frontier line dividing French Dahomey from British Lagos, and towards the east to the town of Barua, on Lake Chad, though this latter line was to be so drawn as to include to the northwards the whole of the Sokoto Empire.¹ By the Anglo-German agreements of 1885, 1886, 1890, and 1893, the eastern boundary was fixed by a line running from the rapids on the Cross River (near Old Calabar) to Yola, and thence to the southern shores of Lake Chad, so as to leave the Bornu Empire within the British sphere.² The tract of territory thus defined has an area of some 500,000 square miles, with a population approximated at thirty millions, and within its limits there naturally exists an immense variety of country and of inhabitants. The nature of the greater part of the country is entirely different to the rest of our West Coast possessions, for the principal reason that it extends so much further into the interior; while, with regard to the inhabitants, we need only say here that they may be classed widely as pagans and Mohammedans, the former dwelling to the south of the Niger-Benué confluence, the latter to the north.

Commencing with what is termed the Niger Delta, we find the usual characteristics of the West Coast of Africa, viz. low-lying swamps, impenetrable forests, and a vast network of

¹ Anglo-French agreement of 1890.

² We have here referred only briefly to the boundary lines; for fuller particulars the reader should consult Chapter XXI.

streams and creeks, inhabited by numerous pagan tribes, addicted to every species of vile custom, including even cannibalism and human sacrifice. This was the region visited by the earlier Niger expeditions, and in which neither missionary labours nor trade have, so far, done much towards the civilization of the native. The principal tribes of the Delta districts are the Idzo (or Ejo), nearest the sea; the Ibo, further inland; and the Igara, extending almost as far north as the confluence; with their subdivisions, as well as with their customs and peculiarities, we shall deal later. Historically there is little of interest about these Lower Niger countries; as the people are found to be to-day, so probably they were ten or even twenty centuries ago—as low a form of humanity as perhaps exists in the world. The country has seen few material changes; perpetual wars have been always going on, and revolts and insurrections have given new rulers to the tribes, but until the advent of the white man, less than half a century ago, the life led by the natives was primitive to a degree. Neither can it be truly said that forty years of intercourse with Europeans has resulted in much improvement, for, ten miles inland from the river banks, the people are still the veriest savages.

Above this pagan land, i.e. at the confluence, there is a marked change, not only in the type of the people, but also in the nature of the country. Mohammedan influence commences to show itself, and the low swampy wastes are superseded by rocky hills and far-extending grassy plains well studded with magnificent trees. Here lies the hope of Nigeria, and the hope also of British West Africa, a land both fertile and healthy, where the European can live for a period of several years without endangering his health; a land with possibilities of many kinds, and, when fully developed, likely to compete in the matter of commercial importance with any part of Equatorial Africa. This region

is known to the world at large as the Central and Western Soudan, and comprises many flourishing Mohammedan kingdoms, as well as numerous pagan tribes, mostly under Mohammedan influence. How this Mohammedan power grew up, and gradually ousted the aboriginal pagans, we shall see when discussing the rise of the great Fulah Empire, though all the Mohammedan states of Nigeria do not owe their existence to the Fulah invasion—the Bornu Empire, for instance, having been a Mohammedan kingdom for several centuries before the Fulah ascendancy. The principal kingdoms of this northern portion of Nigeria may be briefly enumerated as follows:—On the extreme east Bornu; then Sokoto, occupying a central position and including Adamawa, Muri, the old Hausa States, and several minor kingdoms; while on the extreme west lie Gando (including Nupé and Ilorin) and the pagan state of Borgu. A slight sketch of these kingdoms will not be out of place.

Bornu¹ may be considered to be a *Central Soudan* state of equal, and at one time superior, importance to Darfur and Wadai, and having no connection with the states of the Western Soudan. From a historical point of view it is, perhaps, the most remarkable of all these Mohammedan kingdoms, since it has a story which can be traced back from generation to generation for almost a thousand years—not altogether a legendary story, but one that has been written down with more or less care.² It rose to great power; it became notable for its civilization and for the warlike qualities of its people, then, like all Muslim kingdoms, it

¹ The tribal markings of the Bornu pagans consist of numerous curved lines cut into the cheeks.

² Previous to the beginning of the sixteenth century (or A.H. 900) there was no written history of Bornu. About that time the history was written up from oral tradition, and, henceforward, regular records were kept.

suddenly commenced to decline. In the zenith of its might Bornu defied even the Fulahs, but its constant successes in war produced in the people and their rulers that unfortunate confidence that begets callousness. The Bornus imagined themselves to be invincible; the army was neglected, and the ruling classes became luxurious in their habit of living—a taste which soon spread to the people of the towns. The nation, from being warlike, soon developed that effeminacy so fatally evident in the peaceful Oriental, with the result, as we now know, that Bornu recently became an easy prey to the adventurer Rabeh¹ and his handful of partially trained troops.

Of the origin of the Bornu people it is impossible to say anything definite, for of pre-record times little is known, and it must be remembered that until the present century no European had approached the country. Still, such Arabic historians as Ebn Said (A.D. 1282), Ebn Batuta (A.D. 1353), Makrisi (A.D. 1400), Leo Africanus² (A.D. 1518), and Sultan Bello give it as their opinion—founded, without doubt, on the best information obtainable—that the earliest-known Bornu

¹ *Vide* Chapter XVIII.

² Leo Africanus was a very remarkable person. He was a Moor born in Granada (Spain), then a Mohammedan city, and, when a child, moved with his parents to Fez, where he was educated. His somewhat superior education enabled him to obtain various good appointments, and he accompanied his uncle to Timbuctoo, on an embassy from Fez. He travelled also throughout Northern Africa, Persia, and Egypt, but was eventually captured by a Venetian and presented, as a slave, to Pope Leo X., who converted him to Christianity, gave him his liberty, and encouraged him to translate his African journals into Italian. He took the Christian name of John, and, the Pope being his godfather, the surname of Leo, with the fanciful addition of Africanus. John Pory translated (1600) his work into English under the title of *Geographical Historie of Africa, by John Leo Africanus, a Moor born in Granada and brought up in Barbarie*.

kings were of Berber origin, and that, furthermore, the Bornu people held the tradition that they themselves were descended from the Berbers. It is also remarkable that the Hausas still call the Bornus "Berbere." That the present inhabitants are descendants of the aborigines of the country is most improbable, and everything tends to show that Bornu was, in the early days of Mohammedanism, conquered by Arabs from the north, who, in all probability, consisted of several tribes, and who, having forced Islam on the conquered race, gradually formed a mixed nation. One thing, however, is certain: Bornu is the oldest Mohammedan kingdom in this part of Africa, its rulers, if not also its inhabitants, having been, as we have pointed out, followers of the Prophet several hundreds of years before the rise of the Fulah power.

The Bornu Empire appears, at different times, since 1000 A.D., to have passed through several distinct epochs, in each of which one or other of the neighbouring tribes gradually incorporated itself in the empire, and became the dominant power.¹ The aborigines were, according to the most reliable accounts, pagan negroes of the tribe of So, who were eventually conquered by the Kanuri (Tibus) from the adjacent kingdom of Kanem; and the Kanuri language has remained the language of the people. Leo Africanus tells us that the early kings of Bornu came from the Libyan tribe of the Bardoa, or Berdoa,² but Barth, who studied these matters, regards it as not improbable that by Berdoa was meant rather the Teda or Tibu than the real Berber or Mazigh. Be that

¹ Barth mentions the following sultans as having reigned in early times over Bornu:—A.D. 1000, Ayuma; 1086, Humé (the first Mohammedan ruler); 1221, Dunama Dibalami; 1307, Ibrahim Nikalemi; 1353, Edris ben Ibrahim; Daud; 1387, Othman ben Edris; 1393, Omar; 1472, Ali Dunamami; 1505, Edris Katarkamabi; 1572, Edris Alawoma; 1626, Haj Omar; 1645, Ali ben Haj Omar.

² "Where there is hardly anything but sand, scorpions, and monsters."—*Leo Africanus*.

as it may, there seems to be little doubt that the kings introduced northern blood into the country, for until about A.D. 1100 the sultans of Bornu are said to have been "of a red complexion, like the Arabs," and even in the seventeenth century it is recorded that the Bornu army consisted of two parts—the Reds and the Blacks. Curiously enough, Bornu owed its rise to importance to its neighbour Kanem, who, with the assistance of the Teda, founded the powerful dynasty of the Bulala, and established the great Mohammedan Empire called by Leo Africanus Gaogo, extending, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, from Kanem eastwards to Dongola on the Nile. Now Kanem, as we have seen, had had a hand in the foundation of the Bornu Empire, and, though the latter had declared its independence, the former still continued, in one way or another, to have great influence over the smaller kingdom. This was the state of affairs for many years, until eventually the power of Kanem commenced to decline, when, in the sixteenth century, the Bornu sultan Edris Katarkamabi completely subdued the rival kingdom, and reduced it to the condition of a province of Bornu. Such it remained for more than two centuries, while its suzerain rapidly increased in strength; a great empire was being built up; Mohammedan civilization had set in, and the warlike rulers of Bornu struck terror into the hearts of every African tribe within a radius of hundreds of miles.

For two hundred years Bornu had no rival worthy of the name, and, having defeated all comers, commenced to look about for fresh conquests. This brings us to the middle of the eighteenth century, when Sultan Ali Omarmi turned his attention to the Tuaregs of the north (the very people in whom the Bornu dynasty had its origin). The Tuaregs had become the inveterate enemies of Bornu, and although the energetic Ali Omarmi succeeded in holding them in check, his successor, Ahmed, was found wanting, and, early in the

present century, the Tuaregs were on the point of overthrowing the Sefuwa dynasty, when a new enemy appeared. The Fulah rising (with which we shall deal at length in the next chapter) was already an accomplished fact, and the weaker parts of the Bornu Empire had been attacked and subdued by this new and unforeseen foe, whose operations were swift and complete; when, just as the great kingdom was on the point of resigning itself to the domination of the Fulahs, there came on the scene a deliverer for Bornu. It was again Kanem that was responsible for the maintenance of Bornu's power, for a sheik of Kanem birth took upon himself to preach a jihad against the Fulah invaders, and raise an army to drive them out of the country. Mohamed-el-Amin, el Kanemi,¹ was born in Fezzan, of Kanem parents, and, having travelled in Egypt, came, as Sheik of the Koran, to Kanem, where he soon gained immense popularity on account of his benevolent disposition; while, as Denham says, "the miracles and cures which he performed, by writing charms, were the theme of all the country round." He now came forward (about 1808) in a new light, and in a fabulously short time he had collected a force of Kanembu warriors sufficiently strong to utterly rout the Fulahs and to force them to quit Bornu for ever.

El Kanemi's successes made him the hero of the hour, and the old warlike spirit awoke once more in the breasts of the people of Bornu, who desired their deliverer to become their sultan. This, however, he refused, but, at the same time, he claimed the right to appoint a sultan, and himself retained the dictatorship of the kingdom. The man whom he selected was Dumana, Ahmed's son, but it soon became evident that the choice was not a wise one, and the sheik deposed Dumana and proclaimed Mahomed, Ahmed's brother, sultan in his stead. Mahomed likewise failed, and Dumana again assumed

¹ Sometimes called Lamino.

the sultanship, but was eventually slain in battle by the Baghirmis. Ibrahim, his brother, now became sultan, and he it was who welcomed Clapperton to his capital at Kuka¹ in 1823, though the virtual ruler of the kingdom was still the sheik, El Kanemi. The latter was, in Clapperton's time, engaged in constant warfare with the neighbouring states, and with his old enemies, the Fulahs, and we have already related, in a previous chapter, the part played by Clapperton's colleague (Denham) in these various expeditions. The sheik retained the reins of government until his death in 1835, completing the subjection of all the neighbouring tribes (including the important kingdoms of Baghirmi, Wadai, and Darfur), and leaving Bornu in a higher state of prosperity and civilization than any country of Central Africa. He had founded a new dynasty—that of the Kanemiyin—and was succeeded by one of his forty-two sons, Omar, who became sultan, though always preferring to style himself, as his father had done, by the humbler title of sheik.

When Barth visited Bornu, in 1851, Sheik Omar was still reigning, though, during the great traveller's sojourn in the country, an attempt was made by the old dynasty to dethrone him, and his brother Abderahman actually succeeded in usurping the throne for a few months. Omar, however, continued to reign until 1881, but, in spite of his many good qualities, he was undoubtedly a weak ruler, and his kingdom commenced that decline from which it has never been able to recover. According to the strict letter of the Koran, succession follows from brother to brother; now Sheik Omar, as we know, had originally forty-one brothers, of whom Abba Nas should have, in the natural course of events, become sultan,

¹ Kuka, or Kukawa, was built by El Kanemi, and received its name from the tree most abundant on the spot, viz. the baobab. It is situated about fourteen miles from the western shore of Lake Chad. Before the Fulah invasion the capital was at Kars (or Ghasr) Egomo.

but Omar, by evading the Koran, arranged that he should be succeeded by his son, Sheik Boubakar, who accordingly reigned until 1884. He was popular, frank, and generous, and displayed superior warlike abilities, which, however, were cut short by his premature death while planning an expedition against Wadai. Boubakar was followed by his brother, Sheik Birahim, who again was succeeded, a year later, by Sheik Ashim, the last Sultan of Bornu. Under Sheik Ashim the great sultanate crumbled away, since he had always been averse to warfare, preferring to live a peaceful and religious life to one of conquest and bloodshed.¹ His ideas were not those of his subjects, and he had, consequently, never been popular, while his utter disregard for the safety of his kingdom eventually led to the burning of the capital² and his flight to Zinder.

The above sketch of the history of Bornu is enough to show the reader that the inhabitants of these inland parts are far superior in every way to the natives of the coast, their superiority, of course, lying in the fact that for several centuries they had been under the civilizing influence of Islam, and have had intercourse, by means of regular caravans, with North Africa. Between Tripoli and Bornu there have always existed friendly and commercial relations; Bornu supplied slaves, ostrich feathers, and other produce, while Tripoli returned European goods. The latter, therefore, have become a necessity to the people, and consequently this Central African state offers a valuable market for British merchandise. The fact that the Royal Niger

¹ Monteil, who visited Bornu in 1891-2, says that Sheik Ashim was about fifty years of age, had four hundred wives and innumerable children. Abba Kiari, son of Sheik Boubakar (a great warrior), was heir presumptive to the throne. *De Saint Louis à Tripoli, par le lac Tchad*. Lieutenant-Colonel P. L. Monteil. Paris, 1895.

² See Chapter XVIII.

Company's steamers can convey goods to a point on the Benué within two hundred miles of the capital is sufficient to prove that when trade with Bornu by this route becomes firmly established, the products of the country will naturally flow in this direction. From Tripoli to Kuka is a land journey of roughly 1200 miles, the cost of transport is enormous, and it is unnecessary, therefore, to dwell on the advantages to Bornu of the southern outlet for her trade. The one drawback at present is the nature of the commodity that she most desires to dispose of, viz. slaves, for which there is a ready sale in Tripoli and other Mediterranean ports; to put a stop to this trade and to induce the people to substitute for it something of value to Europe, will require time. That Bornu will become in the near future a highly remunerative British possession is certain, though whether this will be brought about by opening the route from the Benué, or by a railway connecting Kuka with Sokoto and Lagos, remains to be seen.

We will now consider what may be expected of Bornu in the way of produce other than slaves, but first it will be necessary to say something of the country itself. Bornu proper is¹ situated in the basin of the Chad,² and lies, as we have stated, on the extreme north-east of Nigeria. On the east it is bounded by Lake Chad, the River Shari, and a portion of Adamawa within the German sphere of influence; its northern boundary is an irregular line running above and below the 14th parallel N. lat.; on the west it adjoins the Sokoto provinces (old Hausa states) of Katsena, Kano,

¹ We assume that Rabeh's recent conquest of Bornu will make little real change in the country: it is still doubtful if it was anything more than a razzia, and even if it be an occupation, it implies merely a new dynasty—nothing very novel to the kingdom.

² Chad is the simplest form of spelling. It is also frequently written Tchad and Tsad, the latter approaching nearest to the native pronunciation of the name.

Yakoba,¹ and Muri; while to the south it is cut off from the Benué by a portion of Muri and British Adamawa. Altogether it may be said to include an area of some 50,000 square miles, and a population of about five millions, though these figures cannot be considered anything more than a mere approximation, since the outlying tribes (more especially those who have remained pagans) are ever striving—and sometimes successfully—to throw off their allegiance to the Sheik. The country is watered by the Komadugu² Yobé and its affluents, entering Lake Chad a little east of the old capital of Yo, and the Komadugu N'Gala flowing into the lake on the south; while the Shari (the principal feeder of the great inland sea) empties itself within a short distance of the Komadugu N'Gala.³ The soil is everywhere extremely fertile, but a great part of the country is subject, during the rainy season, to excessive floods, as, with the exception of the mountainous region to the south of Lake Chad, the land lies in a depression. Still it is capable of producing valuable crops, and, could the ruling classes be persuaded to give up slave-raiding for agriculture, cotton, indigo, wheat, millet, and various cereals, might yield rich harvests. As matters stand, it is not worth the people's while to cultivate the soil more than just sufficient to supply their own immediate wants, though, wherever such small patches of cultivation are met with, there is proof enough of the luxuriance of the land, and the dum and date palms, the baobabs, and acacias with which the country is scattered, each produce, untended, articles of commercial value. Neither is this all, for among the hills in Southern Bornu there are signs of mineral wealth,

¹ Or Bantshi.

² *Komadugu*, in Kanuri, means a mass of water, either a river or a lake.

³ Lake Chad has no outlet. Evaporation accounts for its diminishing area.

and tin, if not more precious metals, will doubtless be forthcoming with the development of the country; while the trade in ostrich feathers¹ (at one time a very important one, though of recent years much neglected) might be resuscitated, and there is still a sufficient number of elephants in the border districts to produce a supply of ivory for many years to come.

To describe Kuka, the capital, when we have already said that it was burnt to the ground by Rabeih, may appear, at first sight, a waste of time, yet the mere burning of a town of this kind means very little, and does not imply total destruction. Kuka, therefore, has probably by now grown up again on its ruins, and it is unlikely that the general plan of the town will have materially altered. Barth, who resided there for many months on different occasions, describes it very fully, and other writers (including Colonel Monteil,² the latest traveller who has passed through Kuka) do not

¹ The trade in ostrich feathers between Bornu and Tripoli was the means of introducing a money currency (Maria Theresa dollar) into the Soudan. *Denham* (1823) says that, in his time, ostrich skins were worth, in Kuka, three to six dollars; ivory, two dollars per 100 lbs; and raw hides, two dollars per 100 skins. "The natives have several ways of killing the ostrich. On finding the eggs they will dig a hole near the place, and, covering themselves with earth, watch the return of the bird, when an arrow shot through the brain as she sits kills her, without injuring the plumage. They will also chase them for hours when young, and, taking them alive, they become as tame as the domestic fowl." The traveller Rohlf's mentions having seen an ostrich farm at Magumeri, S.W. of Kuka.

² Just before Monteil's visit (1891) a mission (under Mr. Charles Mackintosh) from the Royal Niger Company had been at Kuka. The French traveller does not attempt to conceal his disgust at having been forestalled by the perfidious Englishman, and his description of his interview with the Sheik (from whom he got little satisfaction) is interesting, particularly when he introduced himself as envoy sent to pay the addresses of the *King* of the French to the great and renowned Sheik Ashim, so well known in France!

add anything of value to the description of Barth. Kuka has always owed its importance to its central situation and its connection, by a fairly safe and direct caravan route, with Fezzan and Tripoli, thus filtering, as it were, nearly all the trade existing between North and West Central Africa. Enormous Arab caravans, with long strings of camels, are constantly passing through the towns, where a weekly market is held for the sale of various goods, though, perhaps, the most important trade is done in slaves, camels, and horses.¹ The scene at the Monday fair is described by Barth as of great interest: "It calls together the inhabitants of all the eastern parts of Bornu, the Shuwa, and the Koyam, with their corn and butter; the former, though of Arab origin, and still preserving in purity his ancient character, always carrying his merchandise on the back of oxen, the women mounted upon the top of it; while the African Koyam employs the camel, if not exclusively, at least with a decided preference; the Kanembu with their butter and dried fish; the inhabitants of Makari with their tobies; even Budduma, or rather Yedina,² are very often seen in the market selling whips made from the skin of the hippopotamus, or sometimes even hippopotamus meat, or dried fish."

The town itself covers an area of two or three square miles, lying in a long and narrow rectangle east and west, and is divided into two distinct parts, separated by a spacious market-place. The eastern portion is occupied solely by royalty, the western by the Arab merchants³ and the people of Kuka, and through the centre of the latter quarter runs

¹ The present value of a good horse is said to be 12 M.T. dollars, a camel, fifteen to twenty dollars. The dollar is still the standard of the currency of Kuka, cowries forming the small change.

² Pirates who dwell on the islands of Lake Chad.

³ These are chiefly agents of mercantile houses in Tripoli and Murzuk.

(due east from the main western gate) the Dendal, or principal thoroughfare. A white clay wall some twenty feet high surrounds each quarter of the town, and a mosque, with walls of the same material, stands just outside the palace, which is built of mud, with a shingle roof. A few of the better class of houses are constructed of the same material, but, as a rule, the walled-in enclosure, containing the circular straw huts of the family, prevails. Luxury has, however, of late years, taken possession of the wealthier merchants, who have introduced solid-looking buildings of sun-dried bricks with flat roof-tops, which give almost an Oriental appearance to the town. Of the 50,000 or 60,000 inhabitants, the majority are Mohammedans, born and bred as such, and non-fanatical.¹ In this latter respect they differ considerably from the more zealous Fulah converts to Islam, who hate their co-religionists of Bornu,² describing them as "lukewarm," principally because, in the Bornu Empire, women, contrary to Koranic doctrines, are allowed to have a voice in public affairs, and play an important part in private life. This is certainly a great peculiarity of Bornu as well as of Kanem, whence possibly it originated, and in Kuka the women are very independent—the Queen Mother (Maguira), for instance, being consulted on all public matters, and having charge of certain provinces. This state of affairs, so seldom met with in a Mohammedan country, may have arisen from the indolence of the ruling classes, who are content nowadays to leave everything to their head-slaves, in order that they themselves may live at ease. The army has

¹ Monteil says that there are three sects in Bornu, viz. *Tidiani*, of which the Sheik is head; *Quedirch*, most numerous; and *Sennussiyeh*, comparatively modern.

² The Fulahs and Hausas call Bornu the "land of lies." The Bornus retaliate, and to call a native of Bornu a Fulah is the grossest insult.



VULANE OF MOKOTO. 2.

[To face page 310.]

suffered in this respect, as the chief officers have no ambition beyond drawing their emoluments and passing their time peaceably at home. Still, for Central Africa, the army is fairly well-armed and well-trained, though somewhat behind the times. It consists of about 30,000 men, of whom, perhaps, one-fourth are rough irregular cavalry, partly clothed in quilted suits and chain armour. The front rank carry lances, the rear rank swords, and each troop is accompanied by a third rank of infantry armed with a species of boomerang with several sharp points,¹ which is hurled at the enemy. The arms of the infantry consist of a few modern rifles, a large proportion of flint-locks, spears, swords, knives, and bows and arrows, while some of the men wear a zouave uniform similar to that worn by the Hausa Constabulary on the coast. The artillery is poor; a few guns have been introduced from Tripoli, and others have been cast in the country, but they are of a very old pattern, and not capable of being moved about.

We have said enough of Bornu to give the reader some idea of the country, its past history, and the advantages likely to be derived from it by the establishment of trade between the Benué and Kuka;² we will now pass to the western extremity of Nigeria, leaving the Fulah Empire (in which we include both Sokoto and Gando) for a separate chapter.

Borgu, the western boundary state of Nigeria, is a pagan kingdom situated almost entirely on the right bank of the Kwora, or Middle Niger, and is known also by the name of

¹ This weapon is carried principally by the Tibus; it is known in the Sahara as *diangar* or *mangal*, and is used also by the Baghirnis.

² Besides Kuka there are few towns of any great importance; Zinder is, perhaps, the only one worthy of mention, and its trade passes either to Kuka or to Katsena and Kano. There is also a caravan route from Zinder to the north, through Air or Asben.

Bariba; in fact, Bariba is the name by which the country and its people are always locally spoken of. It may be said approximately to lie between the meridian of Greenwich (or even a little west) and the fifth degree of east longitude, its area being estimated at 40,000 square miles. Little is known of its early history, though native report says that at some period, many centuries ago, emigrants from the Barbary States settled in the country, and gave it the name by which it is still known; these Berber settlers, it is said, were driven out of Northern Africa by the Mohammedan conquerors,¹ and brought with them their own religion, which appears to have contained some of the doctrines of Christianity.² By their Mohammedan neighbours the Baribas have, however, always been considered pagans, though they themselves assert that their belief is in one "Kisra, a Jew, who gave his life for the sins of mankind." Be that as it may, there is little doubt that at the present day they are no better than pagans, the only trace that remains of their belief being an annual festival at which are commemorated certain events in the life of Kisra, intermingled with strange heathen rites. The country is divided into several small kingships, and so far there has been little intercourse between the petty chiefs of the interior and Europeans; Duncan³ reached Adafodia (due

¹ It is probable that both Borgu and Bornu had their origin in the Barbary States, the settlers in the former being expelled on refusing to accept Islam, those in the latter at first content to adopt the new faith, but later on deciding to quit their homes. As a corroboration it may be mentioned that the Borgus claim relationship with the Bornus, and the native name for Bornu is Berebere or Baribari, which, like Bariba, may be considered to be synonymous with Barbary and Berber.

² "It seems clear that a great part of the Berbers of the desert were once Christians (they are still called by some Arabs 'the Christians of the desert'), and that they afterwards changed their religion and adopted Islam."—*Barth*.

³ *Ide* pages 128 and 151.

north of Abomey) in 1845, but was murdered, as had been Wolf before him, and no further attempt to enter the country was made until 1894, when Captain Lugard¹ visited the principal towns for the purpose of making treaties on behalf of the Royal Niger Company. It is to this intrepid traveller, therefore, that we are indebted for our knowledge of the interior of Borgu. "Geographically," he tells us,² "the country does not present any features of marked interest. It is an undulating country, with few and small hills, and no large rivers. The watershed is towards the Niger, which forms its eastern boundary, and the most important rivers are the Moshi (which, in the last fifty miles or so, forms the southern frontier of Borgu) and the Ori, which rises near the capital, Nikki, and reaches the Niger in Boussa's territory. In the extreme west the watershed would appear to be towards the Volta." Geologically there is a great sameness about the country. "Masses of grey granite alternate, or appear simultaneously with the copper-coloured honeycomb lava which forms the prevailing feature of West Africa, as it does of the greater part of British East Africa. This 'iron-stone' derives its colour from the very great percentage of iron³ which it contains." The two important towns of Kiamia and Nikki (the capital) were visited, as well as Ilesha, towards the south, when, having successfully concluded the treaties, the mission passed into Yoruba.

The eastern portion of Borgu, adjoining the Middle Niger, belongs mostly to the king of Boussa, whose capital is famous in connection with the death of Mungo Park. With the king the Royal Niger Company has been on friendly terms for some years, though commercially Borgu has up till

¹ Now Lieutenant-Colonel Lugard, C.B., D.S.O. *I*de Chapter XXI.

² *Geographical Journal*, Vol. VI., 1895, page 205.

³ The iron is smelted by the natives and made into hoes, which form a species of currency in the country.

now proved of no value. The importance of the country is its geographical position, forming, as it does, a wedge into territory claimed partly by France and partly by England, and of this we shall have much to say in a subsequent chapter ; for the present, it is enough to mention that certain main trade routes pass through the Borgu interior, and African towns situated on such highways are always considered to attract trade, though in the case of Borgu (infested with cut-throats and robbers) it will require many years of careful administration, backed up by force, to develop the resources of the land. All this is well known to the British authorities, who are even now busily engaged in recruiting regiments of Yorubas in the hinterland of Lagos, for the purpose, among other duties, of curtailing the wanton excesses of the Baribas. When this has been brought about Borgu will doubtless settle down to peaceful pursuits, and the country has a great agricultural future, for the bulk of the population, like their neighbours of Yoruba, are born agriculturists, waiting only for the extermination of the numerous raiding bands to show what their land is capable of producing. These raiders are a veritable curse to the country ; the chiefs themselves would willingly carry out the terms of their treaties and encourage commercial intercourse with Europeans ; but there exists among the younger generation a species of "Jingoism," which can never permit it to be forgotten that, for eight or nine centuries, Borgu has been a warlike nation, and the only pagan state able to resist the Fulah invasion. This invincibility they attribute to their strange "Kisra faith," though Lugard offers two other suggestions, viz. "first, their reputation for a knowledge of witchcraft and deadly poisons, which renders their poisoned arrows very dreaded ; second, to their fighting tactics. So far from dreading to separate their forces, their custom, I am told, when they attack by day, is to make a

feint of attack simultaneously on front and rear, reserving the bulk of their strength for a strong attack on the centre of a long caravan. This mode of attack by ambush would generally succeed in dividing their enemies' forces and inducing panic. They, however, love most to effect a night surprise." Whether it be due to their fighting tactics or to their religion, the prowess in arms of the Baribas is beyond dispute. Surrounded on nearly every side by Mohammedans, thirsting for conquest and for the conversion of the heathen, Borgu remains to this day an independent state; but with two European nations waiting at its gates, the inevitable is now merely a matter of months, and the warlike Baribas will have to go the way of the Sofas, the Ashantis, and other West African troublers.





CHAPTER XIII.

THE FULAH EMPIRE.

218 We have treated, so far, of what may be called the outskirts of Nigeria, preferring to reserve the heart of the territory for separate discussion, as, in so doing, we are enabled to offer to the reader a more or less connected account of the rise and progress of a comparatively modern African nation. That the great Fulah Empire merits a chapter or more to itself will be apparent when it is known that within its area is comprised more than half the country known as the Niger Protectorate, and probably all the most valuable and important parts of that country. Its head is the Sultan of Sokoto—Lord of the Faithful, and, in Fulah eyes, second only to the Sultan of Turkey—whose dominions extend from Bornu to Borgu,¹ and from the Sahara to the Lagos boundary. How this Empire has grown up in the present century is one of the most interesting and remarkable events in the history of West Africa. To speak of the advent of the Fulahs² as

¹ It is important to distinguish between these two countries, whose names are a source of endless confusion to the English press, and consequently to the British public.

² Called Fulbe (sing. Fullo) by the Mandingos; Fellani (sing. Bafellanchi) by the Hausas; Fellata by the Kanuri; Fullan by the Arabs; Fellani, Foulfouldé, Peul, Poul, by the French. There are also countless subdivisions, each with a local name, bearing no resemblance to the foregoing. Vide *Les Peulhs: Étude d'Ethnologie Africaine*. J. de Crozals, Paris, 1883.

an invasion of the Central and Western Soudan is perhaps erroneous, for the movement was, in reality, a revolt by a people who had been settled among the aborigines of Guber for many years, yet, after the revolt had proved successful, it became for the remaining states an invasion in the name of religion, and as prosperous a *jihad* as Mohammedan ever preached. From east to west, from north to south, this mighty wave of conversion swept over the land, carrying all before it; resistance was in vain—Islam or slavery was the only alternative to those of the pagans who escaped the sword.

The origin of the Fulahs is wrapt in mystery, and previous to the year 1802 little is known for certain of their movements, though from occasional scraps of information found in the historical notes of the older tribes we learn that these strange people had been widely spread over all the Soudan countries for many centuries. They had lived a wandering pastoral life, grazing their herds and flocks wherever good feeding grounds were to be found; that they were of a race totally distinct from the negroes was evident; their features were well-marked and fine, while their complexion was light—so light in fact that the negroes spoke of them as white or yellow men.¹ They kept much to themselves, spoke a language of their own, and maintained their general characteristics. Whence they came must remain a matter of pure conjecture, for there is no foundation on which to build their history, though it is generally supposed that they were emigrants from the north; their language tells us nothing, and, being unwritten, the few words which bear a resemblance to other languages may be accounted for by the nomadic

¹ *Pul*, ruddy or red. “Their name signifies *yellow* or *brown*. They are even called ‘Abate,’ i.e. white men, by the Jukos.” KOELLE, *Africa Polyglotta*, page 21.

nature of these people.¹ The earliest records go to prove that the Fulahs had their first settlements along the lower course of the Senegal, and that they gradually spread towards the east, and this as far back as the fourteenth century. Their intelligence and ability were always considered to be of a superior order, and, although they lived in small colonies as simple shepherds, they were regarded by the negro rulers with a certain amount of suspicion, since on several occasions the little bands of wanderers had shown signs of a desire to assert themselves, and to bring their religious opinions to the front. [Early in the fourteenth century we find that they sent a Mohammedan mission from their western settlements to Bornu (then a Mohammedan kingdom); by the sixteenth century they were well established about the Middle Niger, and by the beginning of the seventeenth century they had spread as far east as Baghirmi. Thus they had overrun the whole of the Western and Central Soudan, from what is now the French Soudan, even up to the borders of the province of Darfur, but the tribe was so scattered that its members had no real power in the land, and the paucity of their numbers forced them to be subservient to the pagans amongst whom they dwelt. The chief men of the tribe were,

¹ M. Eichwaldt (*Journal de la Société Ethnologique*, 1841) endeavoured to prove that the Fulahs were connected with the Malays, affecting to find a certain similarity in the language of these two peoples, though, as Barth points out, the only striking similarities are the words for fish and spear. "The Fulah language is distinguished from most others by a remarkable peculiarity. It makes no distinction between the masculine and feminine genders, but divides all things, animate or inanimate, into two great classes—human beings and everything belonging to mankind on the one hand, and on the other everything else, whether animate or not. The former belong to what is called the *human* or *rational*, the latter to the *brute* or *irrational* gender."—*Keith Johnston*.

A few numerals in the Fulah and Kaffir (South African) languages are identical.

however, much respected by the dominant race for their learning and astuteness, and in the last century it was no uncommon thing to find a Fulah priest acting as *mallam* (i.e. learned), or right-hand man to the ruler of a Hausa State.

In 1802 occurred events, which, though trifling in themselves, brought about the great revolution which resulted in the complete overthrow of the pagans and the establishment of Mohammedanism in this part of Africa. There was at that time living in Gober,¹ at the village of Daghel, an *imam* or high priest of the Fulahs, named Othman, whose religious zeal had already begun to tell upon the pagans. Fearing loss of power among his subjects, Bawa, the ruler of Gober, summoned Othman and his chiefs to his presence, and publicly upbraided them for endeavouring to win over his people to their religion. So incensed was Othman at this that he forthwith appealed to all Fulahs to uphold Islam against the heathen, inspiring them with religious songs, until they were seized with the wildest fanaticism, and flocked to his standard. Bawa was, however, too strong for his opponent, and the Mohammedans suffered severe defeats, but this only added fuel to the fire, and Othman, assisted by his elder brother, Abd Allahi, and his son, Mohamed Bello, soon commenced to gain decisive victories over the pagans. Gradually the shepherd host was transformed into a disciplined army, and the war-cry of "Allahu Akber" sounded far and wide throughout the Hausa States; successively the ever-victorious Mohammedans reduced the pagan kingdoms to subjection, until in a few years all that vast region which lies between the Sahara and the Rivers Niger and Benue fell into the hands of the Fulahs; moreover, the kingdom of Yoruba was, later on, successfully attacked and conquered.

¹ The most northern of the Hausa States.

Sheik Othman Dan Fodio, Sheik of the Koran, established his capital at Sokoto,¹ but almost immediately retired from the government of his newly-acquired empire, which he divided between his son Mohamed Bello, and his nephew Mohamed Ben Abdallah (son of his brother Abd Allahi). To Bello were given the kingdoms of Zanfara, Katsena, Daura, Kazori, Kano, Hadejiah, Bautshi, and Adamawa, while Mohamed Ben Abdallah received Gando, Nupé, Ilorin (Yoruba), and Lafia. No sooner was this partition of the Fulah Empire completed than its founder became religiously mad, although his subjects still continued until his death, to regard him as a prophet, and to this day his tomb at Sokoto is a place of pilgrimage to devout Fulahs.² That Othman was a very remarkable man is certain, and it is perhaps worthy of note that the period of his power coincides with that of the Great Napoleon. To compare the two men is of course out of the question; they were at work at such entirely different objects; yet it is a strange fact that in 1802 Napoleon was proclaimed first Consul of France and Othman first Sheik of the Fulahs; in 1804, Napoleon and Othman both found themselves Emperors, and their careers ended almost at the same time—the one defeated and in exile, the other victorious and glorified as a saint, but minus his reason—both victims to their ambition.]

On the death of Sheik Othman,³ his son Atiku attempted

¹ Clapperton and others write it Soccatoo, which at any rate has the merit of showing the pronunciation.

² “Both Hausas and Fulahs believe that the founder of the Empire, Dan Fodio, possessed supernatural powers, that he ranks next after Christ, and that his power of blessing and banning has descended on his successors. But the Hausas believe also in a prophecy that only thirteen Sultans will reign, after which the blessing will depart, and another power will succeed that of the Fulah. The present Sultan is the eleventh of his race.”—*W. Wallace*.

³ About 1817.

to usurp the Sokoto Empire, but Mohamed Bello¹ quickly subdued his brother, and, having kept him in confinement for a year, continued to rule without further trouble on his account. During his reign the different Hausa States endeavoured to throw off the Fulah yoke, but Bello, who had inherited his father's warlike qualities, succeeded in establishing his power in his empire, and at his death (1831), he left to his successor a dominion as well organized as was possible.² Of Bello, Clapperton, who knew him intimately, had a high opinion, describing him as not only an excellent soldier, but also a man of considerable scholarship and enlightenment. Although his life was spent principally in warring against the pagans who inhabited the empire bequeathed to him by his father, yet he found time, in the short intervals of peace, for literary pursuits, and managed to write amongst other things a tolerably complete historical and geographical description of the country over which he reigned. At first sight this may not appear anything very extraordinary, but it must be borne in mind that the Western Soudan is not a land of literature; its language has no written character, and it was therefore necessary for Bello to write in Arabic—a fact which proves him to have been a person of superior erudition. After Clapperton's return to England from his first expedi-

¹ Generally known as Sariki N'Mussulmi, i.e. Commander of the Faithful.

² Atiku, the would-be usurper, succeeded his brother, and after him the following have been Sultans of Sokoto:—Alihu, son of Bello by a female slave (1837-1855); Amadu, son of Atiku (1855-1862); Alihu Keremi, son of Bello (1862-3); Abu Bekr, son of Bello (1863-8); Amadu Rufai, son of Sheik Osman, son of Bello (1868-1873); Mazu, or Diabolu, son of Bello (1874-1879); Omoru, son of Bello (1879-1891); and Abdurrehman, son of Abu Bekr, who came to the throne in March, 1891. Abdurrehman succeeded because the issue of his father's elder brothers had failed; he is now an old man, having been born about 1820.

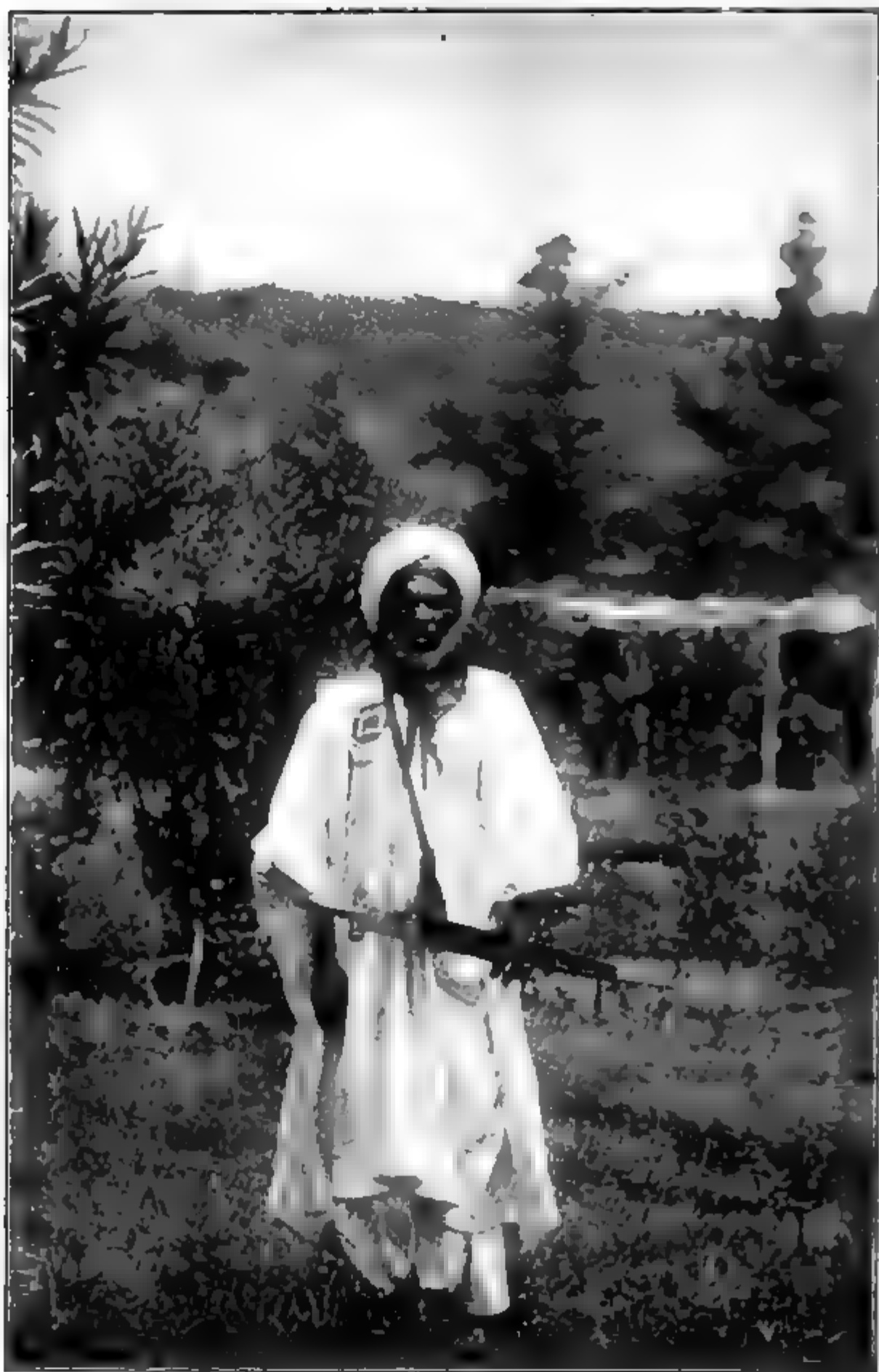
tion,¹ the name of Bello—Prince of the Faithful—became famous in Europe, though this popularity soon waned when news arrived of the manner in which he had treated his old English friend on his second visit. Knowing all the circumstances of the case, and that Clapperton was conveying presents from Great Britain to the Sultan of Bornu—Bello's most hated rival and foe—we cannot wonder at his acting as he did; and the fact still remains that Bello, whatever his shortcomings, must, as Barth says, "rank high among the African princes," while certain it is that, since his death, Sokoto has had no ruler to equal him. Othman—the Fulah Mahdi—had carried his proselytizing hordes through the country, and founded a new empire, but to his son Bello fell the task of consolidating the empire by the subjugation of the scores of pagan tribes to whom Islam had only appealed in a half-hearted manner.

The greater part of Bello's sultanate consisted of the old Hausa States,² whose people have always been, and are to this day, the merchants of the Western Soudan. When the Reformer Othman commenced his conquests, the Hausas had been in undisputed possession of their various states for many centuries; they were for the most part pagans,³ though their rulers were generally Mohammedans, who, from long

¹ *Vide* Chapter VIII.

² Barth tells us that the town of Biram (between Kano and Khadeja) is the oldest seat of the Hausa people. "Biram, Daura, Gober, Kano, Rano, Katsena, and Zegzeg, are the well-known original seven Hausa States, the 'Hausa bokoy' (the seven Hausa), while seven other provinces or countries, in which the Hausa language has spread to a great extent, although it is not the language of the aboriginal inhabitants, are called jocosely 'banza bokoy' (the upstart or illegitimate); these are Zanfara, Kebbi, Nupé or Nyffi, Gwari, Yauri, Yoruba or Yariba, and Kororofa."

³ Mohammedanism had, by the seventeenth century, made rapid advances into Hausaland from Bornu and the north.



A HAUSA.

[To face page 221.]

intercourse with Arabs and various Saharan tribes, had acquired sufficient enlightenment to administer the government of their countries with a certain amount of method and intelligence. Some writers affirm that the Hausas were not indigenous, but, like the Bornus, Borgus, Fulahs, and others, had emigrated, at some remote period, from the north, and proofs of this are said to exist in their language.¹ To the British public, the name Hausa is nowadays familiar enough, chiefly in connection with the word constabulary; yet, little is known of the origin of the West Coast soldier, or of his country, although for some years there has been established in England the "Hausa Association,"² with a Lecturer in Hausa at the University of Cambridge.³ The situation is a peculiar one; the Hausa States are now nominally part and parcel of the Fulah Empire, but the conquered race still remains morally superior in many ways to its conquerors; Hausa, not Fulah, is the *lingua franca* of the Western Soudan and far into the neighbouring regions;⁴ the trade of the country is in the hands of the Hausas; Hausas are our most trusty soldiers in West Africa, and it has been estimated that one per cent. of the whole population of the world are Hausas. Why then, it may well be asked, has the very name Hausa disappeared from modern maps of

¹ Modern authorities maintain that the Hausa language is closely connected with the Semitic languages, and that it is more spoken than any language in Africa. It has been a written language (Arabic characters) for upwards of a hundred years.

² For promoting the study of the Hausa language and people; founded in memory of the Rev. J. A. Robinson, M.A., late scholar of Christ's College, Cambridge, who died at his work, in the employment of the C.M.S., at Lokoja, Niger Territories, on the 25th June, 1891.

³ The Rev. C. Robinson, author of *Hausaland* (1896), who claims that the Hausas are "superior intellectually and physically to all other natives of Equatorial Africa."

⁴ The Court language at Sokoto, or rather Wurno, is Hausa, but in provincial capitals it is Fulah.

Africa? The reason is that cartographers have thought it necessary to keep pace with the times, and swamp Hausaland by Sokoto, which they appear to regard as a species of German Empire. Time alone will show which survives the other, whether the Hausa or the Fulah.¹

As far as we are concerned the name matters little, for we have gone further even than the cartographers, and have comprised in the one newly-coined word "Nigeria" Hausa, Fulah, Sokoto, and a dozen other names. By Fulah Empire—which heads the present chapter—we imply all the states acquired by the great Othman Dan Fodio, the people of which have never been able to regain their independence, and such parts as have since been tacked on either to Sokoto and Gando. Summarizing the principal states or provinces as now existing, we find them to be as follows:—Tributary to Sokoto: Adamawa, Muri (Hamaruwa), Bautshi (Yakoba),² Kano, Katsena, Kwontagora, Gober, Kazori, Kebbi, Zanfara, Daura, Bakundi, Zaria (Zozo or Zegzeg), and Nassarawa. Tributary to Gando: Nupé, Yoruba (Ilorin), and Lafia.³ But it must be remembered that some of these provinces have an intermediate suzerain, and may, perhaps, be ranked as

¹ In the recent Nupé expedition (1897) *six hundred* Hausas (led by British officers) defeated *thirty thousand* Fulahs! Mr. William Wallace, C.M.G., Agent-General of the Royal Niger Company, says:—"It should be clearly understood that the Fulahs, who originally conquered the Hausa States by their military superiority and the advantage that horsemen have over undisciplined foot soldiers in a level and scantily wooded country, now hold their vast Empire of Sokoto through the superstitious dread which they have managed to instil into the Hausas. If it were not for the fear of the Fulah prayers calling down curses on them, the Hausas would at once struggle for their independence." *Geographical Journal*, vol. viii., page 216, 1896.

² Also called Garim Bautshi.

³ In the event of war Sokoto can call on all or any of its provinces to furnish a contingent, and defray expenses.

second-class Sokoto provinces ; such, for example, are Nassarawa, paying tribute to Zaria, and Bakundi, owing allegiance to Muri. Moreover, Gando itself acknowledges the spiritual and temporal superiority of Sokoto, and the Emir-el-Mumenin (as the Sultan of Sokoto is styled) considers that Gando and its dependencies are as much his vassals as are any other of the provinces of the empire.

It will be interesting, perhaps, to give a sketch of the native administration of the Sokoto Empire, showing the method adopted by the sultan for ensuring the good government of his dominions. In the first place, each province is placed in charge of an emir (of course, a Fulah), who is virtually sovereign of a small kingdom. The office is hereditary, but an emir can be deposed at the will of the sultan, though, as a matter of fact, this extreme is seldom resorted to. Secondly, the several provinces are grouped into districts, each of which has a special overseer or inspector, appointed by the sultan. Of these there are at present four, viz. the Ghaladima, in charge of Katsena, Kazori, Magazingara (neighbourhood of Magami N'Didi), and Kebbi ; the Saraki N'Kebbi, supervising the administration of Sokoto and Wurno ; the Sariki N'Saffara,¹ in charge of Zaufara and Daura ; and the Wuzir,² who is responsible for Kano, Zaria, and Adamawa. These officials have to make inspection of their districts (which must be visited once a year, if not more often) with the principal objects of inquiring into matters of state, settling disputes, and seeing that the annual tribute (chiefly slaves) is forthcoming. In the case of the Wuzir's district, which extends for a distance of 700 or 800 miles

¹ Son of the sultan.

² "Owing to the seclusion in which the Sultan of Sokoto lives—somewhat similar to that of the Mikado of Japan in former days—the grand vizier practically rules the whole Fulah Empire."—*W. Wallace.*

from the capital, a deputy-inspector¹ is responsible for Muri and Adamawa, and his tour occupies six months of the year. As regards the actual administration of a province, the emir may be considered to be an autocrat, with powers of life and death, though in the better-organized states (such as Kano) there is an *alkali* or judge, who tries minor offences.² Besides the *alkali* there are several high officials, such as the Ghaladima, or prime minister, the master of the horse, the commander-in-chief, the master of the oxen (quarter-master-general), the lord of the treasury,³ and the chief of the slaves, who form a sort of ministerial council. The revenue is derived from taxes on each head of a family, on each hoe used in cultivation, each dyeing-pot, on palm trees, on slaves, vegetables, &c., sold in the market, as well as from various duties levied on traders coming into the province.

In the more remote parts of the empire, such as Adamawa and Muri, the government is not by any means so well organized as in the Hausa provinces of Sokoto, Gando, or Kano; the emirs are left more to their own devices, and being aware that their liege lord would think twice before sending a punitive expedition so far afield, they do pretty much as they please, so long as they do not fail to pay their annual tribute regularly. It is in these non-Hausa provinces that the Fulah power has done most damage, since the emirs consider the pagan aborigines fair game for slave-raiding, with the result that the country, once fertile and populous, is rapidly becoming devastated. In dealing with the more

¹ At present Bandawaki, chief of Gandi, son-in-law of the Wuzir, and brother of the Sultan Abdurrehman.

² Punishments, as a rule, are summary, there being no prisons except at the capital. The principal punishments are death (by the sword), slavery, and mutilation of hands or feet.

³ The office is never allowed to be held by a member of the Royal Family, from fear of peculation.

important of the Fulah provinces, we will commence with those which lie furthest from the capital of the empire, and gradually work from east to west. Adamawa, the easternmost kingdom over which the Fulahs hold sway, is situated in the upper reaches of the Benué river, and mainly on its southern, or left, bank. The greater part of the country is within the German sphere of influence (1886), though Yola, the capital, is included in the British sphere, and consequently forms part of Nigeria. It was, doubtless, a somewhat faulty arrangement which sanctioned this partition of the kingdom, though little trouble is likely to arise from it, as German Adamawa is held by the emir with a very light grasp, and is probably nothing more than a slaving preserve for the Yola chiefs.

Adamawa is the name applied by the Fulahs to that portion of the old pagan kingdom of Fumbina which was conquered by one Mallam Adama, during the Fulah invasion, and until visited by Barth, in 1851, was unknown to Europeans. We mentioned, when describing that traveller's visit to Yola, that, as he came from Bornu, he was inhospitably received by the emir, and was obliged to quit the town after a stay of only a few hours. No further attempt was made to reach Adamawa until 1880, when members of the Church Missionary Society ascended the Benué in a launch, and sought an audience of the Emir of Yola, who, however, refused to see them. Two years later the German explorer Flegel reached Yola and interviewed the emir, but was soon ordered to leave the country. In 1883, Mr. William Wallace (National African Company) conveyed numerous presents to the emir, who received him graciously, and granted him permission to trade in the country; a trading hulk was accordingly towed up to Yola, but in the meanwhile the emir appears to have repented of his good nature, and to have ordered the hulk away. The Company then commenced

trading higher up the river, at Bubanjidda¹ and Ribago, and letters having been obtained from the Sultan of Sokoto, the Company was promised protection by the Emir of Yola, though it was some years before he would permit trade to be re-opened at Yola itself. In 1881, Dr. Zintgraff made an overland journey from the Cameroons to Yola, but the emir refused him an audience and ordered him away; in the same year Major Claude MacDonald, Her Majesty's Commissioner, though received in a friendly manner by the Yerima (the heir-apparent), failed to see the emir himself.² From that time, although occasional attempts have been made by French explorers³ to stir up strife between the emir and the British trading Company, the latter has firmly established itself in the country with political and commercial treaties, and there is little to fear in the future.

The Adamawa country adjacent to the Benué is well irrigated and extremely fertile, and, were its pagan inhabitants permitted a degree of freedom, much might be done in the way of agriculture. Ranges of hills extend in all directions from the river, attaining a considerable elevation above the general level of the land, which is itself 1000 or 1500 feet above the sea. Amongst these mountains the last remnant of the free pagan aborigines have their strongholds, whence they issue forth to raid the Hausa ivory caravans, and defy the hated Mohammedans. Yola, the capital, is the most important town of this part of Nigeria, and stands at a distance of about three miles inland from the river, though in the wet season the floods extend almost up to the town, which may then be reached in canoes. Between the steamer-anchorage and Yola there is a ridge 300 or 400 feet in

¹ Now in German territory.

² Vide *Up the Niger, Narrative of Major Claude MacDonald's Mission to the Niger and Benué Rivers*, 1892.

³ Notably M. Mizon.



height, studded with flourishing farms, and from the summit of this the first view of Adamawa's capital is obtained. At a distance there is little to be seen of the town itself, whose conical straw-roofed huts lie hidden among numerous magnificent trees, yet on closer acquaintance one finds that it covers a considerable area. The sandy nature of the soil on which it stands gives it a clean and neat appearance; narrow winding lanes run in all directions between the matting enclosures of the various family compounds, wherein are little circular huts and a certain amount of cultivation, well shaded by trees; while in the central part of the town high mud walls enclose the residences of the emir and his chief officials, who live a life of privacy befitting their dignity. Commercially Yola is unimportant; it has no industries, and slaves and ivory form the principal trade of the place.¹ Perhaps nowhere in Africa is slave-raiding carried on to the extent that it is in Adamawa, for the principal reasons, as we shall mention when dealing with the subject of slavery, that the distance of Yola from the various trade centres necessitates enormous numbers of carriers to transport ivory and other goods,² and that the annual tribute to Sokoto consists of no less than 10,000 slaves.

The northern boundaries of Adamawa adjoin Bornu, while, westward, several wild pagan tribes separate it from the Fulah provinces of Muri and Bakundi, the former mostly on the north, the latter entirely on the south bank of the Benué. Bakundi is quite a modern province (if, indeed, it may be termed a province at all), having been founded no more than twenty-five years ago, by the then Emir of Muri, who having

¹ Most of the ivory comes from the great ivory markets of Banyo and Ngaundere, in German Adamawa. Elephants still abound in all the countries south of the Benué, as well as to the south of Lake Chad.

² Camels are rarely met with as far south as this.

been deposed by Sokoto, crossed the river, and carved out a new kingdom for himself by the conquest of the pagan inhabitants. The founder of Bakundi was Baruba, whose brother, Mohammed Ynah, succeeded him as Emir of Muri, and, practically, Baruba's deposition resulted in the strengthening of the Muri province, since the two brothers have always remained on friendly terms, and have worked together to increase the Fulah influence on both banks of the Benué. The town of Bakundi is situated about thirty-five miles up the Tarabba River (which flows into the Benué from the south-east) and within a short distance of the Anglo-German boundary. It is similar in construction to Yola and said to contain 5000 inhabitants, of whom perhaps 1500 are fighting men. Beyond the fact of its being the capital of the province, Bakundi is of no great importance; it is not on a main trade route, and the unsettled state of the country has diverted elsewhere even the small trade which was at one time carried on in ivory. Muri, the sister (or rather the parent) kingdom, though very little known to Europeans, is second only in importance, as a Benué Mohammedan country, to Adamawa. Its principal town, of the same name,¹ stands about fifteen miles from the great river, on a spur of the Muri mountains, and was formerly known as Hamaruwa.² Baikie (1854) was the first white man to visit it, and he was received by the Emir Mohamma with every mark of respect. The

¹ Called Kundi by the Jukos.

² "It commands a fine and extensive view. The river is seen stretching along like a narrow strip of white cloth, between the shades of light green grass, which fringes the water's edge, and a little further back is the darker green of trees, and then the blue ranges of Fumbina with the lofty Mauranu mountain in Adamawa, on the left, and the Muri mountains in Hamaruwa, with their many fanciful peaks, on the right side, each at a distance of twelve miles from the river. In the valleys below the town, from one to two hundred cattle were feeding, and this gave life to the scenery."—*Crowther's Journal*, 1855.

town is much frequented by Hausa caravans, passing from such northern towns as Sokoto, Kano, and Yakoba to Yola, the merchants from the Hausa country bringing tobies, cloth, and Mediterranean goods to exchange for slaves and ivory.

The next Fulaḥ province is Bautshi,¹ which extends from the Benué northwards to the borders of Kano, lying wedged in between Muri and Zaria, though several small pagan tribes still exist in the neighbourhood of the Benué. The capital Yakoba (Garo N'Bautshi)² is situated in a direct line between the towns of Muri and Kano, on the watershed of the Benué and Middle Niger, and at a height of 3000 feet above the sea. It is surrounded by lofty mountains, from which flow down on all sides numerous streams and rivers, watering a most fertile country, while the plateau whereon the town is built is remarkable for its excellent climate. Within the hardened mud walls which encircle the place is the usual Fulaḥ arrangement of mat-enclosed compounds, patches of cultivation, and labyrinthine lanes, with here and there a swamp or a rocky mount. In size Yakoba³ is superior even to Kano, the number of its inhabitants having been estimated by Rohlfs (1866) at 150,000, and its importance is altogether due to its being a meeting-place of several caravan routes, for it produces nothing of itself, except perhaps a few horses, sheep, and cattle. Better known than Bautshi is Zaria,⁴ which adjoins it on the west, and which comprises all that tract of country which is situated between Bautshi and Nupé, and

¹ The Bolobolo and Bolewa of Barth.

² Edward Vogel, accompanied by Corporal Maguire, R.E., it will be remembered, travelled from Bornu to Yakoba, in 1854, after parting with Barth. No record, however, remains of their travels. *Vide* Chapter X.

³ Reclus suggests that Yakoba derives its name either from its Fulaḥ founder, Yakob (Jacob), or from the neighbouring pagan Yako tribe.

⁴ Also known as Zozo and Zegzeg.

between the Benué and Kano. This, however, is only a rough description of its boundaries, and it would be more accurate to say that over this area Zaria claims jurisdiction, though on the borders of the kingdom and among its mountains there are to be found many unsubdued pagan tribes, descendants of the original inhabitants. Still, Zaria is considered to be the largest of the Sokoto provinces, but not by any means the most valuable, for, commercially, Kano stands unrivalled. In Zaria is included the secondary state of Nassarawa, which, although tributary to the larger province, has of recent years grown into importance, principally because of its intercourse with the Royal Niger Company. Its chief town¹ lies some few miles north of the Benué, but in Loko it possesses a port which serves the double purpose of a trading-station and a base of operations for slaving expeditions to the south of the river.

On the direct route between Nassarawa and Zaria, the capital of the province, there is but one town of any size—viz. Kaffi, which is remarkable only for its slave-market. Thence to Zaria, a distance of about 180 miles, the country gradually rises until it attains a level of 2500 feet above the sea, its fertility everywhere being beyond dispute. It is watered by several rivers and their tributaries, the principal being the Kaduna, which, after flowing in a south-westerly direction, eventually passes Bida and empties itself into the Middle Niger at a point some fifty miles above Egga. The town of Zaria is ten miles in circumference, but within its walls perhaps as much as half the space consists of cultivation, and the population does not exceed 30,000, though Standiger (1886) puts it at 50,000 to 100,000. It possesses

¹ Nassarawa, a walled town, said to contain 10,000 inhabitants; about fifty miles from the Benué, and 550 feet above the sea. The tribal mark of the pagan inhabitants of this part of the country is a scar beneath each eye.

what is considered the finest mosque in Nigeria, and a large market place, where considerable business is transacted, and in more legitimate articles than at the towns which we have hitherto been discussing, though it cannot be denied that the traffic in slaves surpasses everything else.¹ Still, Zaria, being within 150 miles of Kano—the great emporium of the Western and Central Soudan—and on the direct route to Nupé, Yoruba, and various other places, receives and exchanges a great amount of native and imported goods and produce. Good horses are to be found on sale (15s. to 6l.), as well as well-tanned leather, beautifully carved calabashes, tobes, Kano cotton cloth, kola nuts, tobacco, and the various necessities and luxuries of life.

We now come to the most important of all the Fulah States—the centre of Hausaland—whose capital, Kano, we have already had frequent occasion to mention. Even before the Fulahs commenced to assert themselves, Kano had become,² under its Hausa rulers, the metropolis of West Africa, and such it has remained to this day; it is worthy therefore of a somewhat fuller account than space has permitted us to devote to the other provincial capitals.

The early history of Kano is that of the Hausas, though it seems doubtful if until the sixteenth century the present capital was anything more than an ordinary fort.³ At that period Bornu was the principal Central African kingdom, and claimed jurisdiction over Kano, a fact which was, however, disputed by the king of Kororofa, or Juko⁴ (on the Benué),

¹ Mr. C. Robinson (1894) saw 300 slaves exposed in the market on one occasion.

² Kano owed its prosperity to the downfall of Katsena, which, prior to the Fulah invasion, was the chief commercial town of these parts.

³ Dala, a rocky hill now enclosed within the town walls.

⁴ Capital Wukari; the Jukos are still pagans, and inhabit the country at the back of Ibi, to the south of the Benué river.

which appears to have been almost as powerful a kingdom as Bornu. The traditions of Kano go back about 1000 years, when, it is said, some Hausa people came from Daura (three days north of Kano), and, under one Kano, founded the town. Kano himself was a pagan, and twenty-four pagan kings succeeded him; then followed Mahomed Rumfra, then six pagan kings, after whom none but Mohammedans have reigned (since 1802 Fulahs). To come down to more modern times,¹ Kano has of late years been in considerable trouble. In 1892, the Emir Bello died, and was succeeded by Tukr, whose harshness soon stirred up insurrection. Isufu came forward to head a rebellion, and with little resistance captured Kano, driving Tukr to Katsena, and proclaiming himself emir. His reign, however, was short, and, on his death, his brother, Baba, came to the throne. In the meanwhile Tukr had sought the assistance of Sokoto, who ordered the people of Kano to acknowledge him as their ruler; this they refused to do, and in the course of time, Sokoto relented and agreed to allow Baba to hold the emirship, on condition that the usual tribute was paid. Tukr made strenuous efforts to regain his lost kingdom, but in March, 1895, he was slain in battle, though not before he had given considerable trouble to Emir Baba.²

The walls of the city of Kano are of sun-hardened mud, twenty or thirty feet in height and fifteen miles in circumference, with thirteen gates, besides a watergate to let out the floods, which are often of considerable extent. It is probably due to the amount of stagnant water found in different parts of the town that Kano has a reputation for

¹ In Clapperton's time Mohammed Dabo was Emir; in Barth's, Othman.

² Tukr was expelled from Katsena, where he had taken refuge, and went to Kamri. Baba attacked and destroyed Kamri, enslaving all the inhabitants.

unhealthiness, otherwise its situation, nearly 1500 feet above the sea, should make its climate everything desirable. As matters are, however, numerous swamps and morasses are met with within the walls, and the holes from which the material for the latter has been obtained are allowed to remain filled with water and the refuse of the town. But sanitation is in no African town a strong point; it is, therefore, wisest for the traveller not to inquire too searchingly into details. As to the general arrangement of Kano,¹ less than half of the enclosed space is inhabited, the remainder consisting of a certain proportion of waste land, but principally of cultivation—in fact, it is estimated that Kano, if besieged, could never be reduced by starvation. The town itself—that is, the inhabited area of the great enclosure—lies to the southwards, the southern wall being the only one which actually adjoins the dwellings. Within it there are several distinct quarters,² though practically it may be divided into two parts, separated by the sheet of water called Jakara, which stretches from east to west almost throughout the width of the town. North of Jakara dwell the Hausas and most of the Arabs that have settled in the place, the houses of the latter being generally somewhat pretentious in appearance, with flat roofs and verandahs,

¹ Clapperton found the latitude of Kano (by observation) to be $12^{\circ} 0' 19' N.$; the longitude (by dead reckoning from Kuka) $9^{\circ} 20' E.$ Robinson fixed the longitude by observation, $8^{\circ} 29' 15' E.$

² The oldest quarter is Dala, close to the hill of the same name, and from a commercial point the most important. Barth mentions twenty-two other Hausa quarters and no less than forty-five Fulah quarters, of the latter that containing the royal residences is known as Yola, “which has given its name to the new capital of Adamawa (the natives of Negroland being not less anxious than Europeans to familiarize the new regions which they colonize by names taken from their ancient homes)”. The fixed population of Kano is about 60,000, and Monteil says that upwards of two millions of natives (traders and others) pass through the town in the year.

while the Hausas and Fulahs (who live to the south of Jakara) are content with their compounds and circular huts. The great market-place is in the Hausa division of the town, abutting on the Jakara lake, and probably in no part of Africa does one see a stranger gathering of people or a more heterogeneous selection of merchandise¹ than here. The sumptuously-apparelled Arab is to be found bartering with the almost naked pagan; Tuaregs of the Sahara are intent on a deal with merchants from Borgu or Wadai; Yorubas, Nupés, Benué tribesmen, Baghirmis, and countless other people are represented, and all with only one idea—the exchange of their merchandise on as favourable terms as possible. This is no ordinary Eastern bazaar, and when we say that in the *kaswa* each day there are no less than 30,000 people, it can be imagined what an amount of business is transacted.

But it is not the market alone which makes Kano prosperous, for the place is a great industrial centre, celebrated throughout West Africa for its cotton-cloth and leather. The former is woven in long, narrow strips, a few inches wide, and generally dyed with indigo, which grows everywhere in the country, the strips being made up neatly into tobes and other garments. So famous is this Kano cloth that the natives of the Soudan will have no other, and it is conveyed by the merchants to all parts—even to Lagos, on the south, and to the shores of the Mediterranean. The

¹ Articles on sale in the Kano market:—Slaves, camels, horses, asses, cattle, natron, leather-work, tobes, turbans, cotton-cloth, tanned hides, silk, kola-nuts, salt, ivory, ostrich feathers, sugar, Manchester goods, beads, paper, needles, sword blades, razors, spices, copper, and every variety of provision. Of European goods it is said that 12,000 camel-loads are brought annually to Kano from the Mediterranean. All important purchases are conducted through a broker, who gets a commission of about five per cent.; the more valuable articles are not exposed for sale, but disposed of privately.



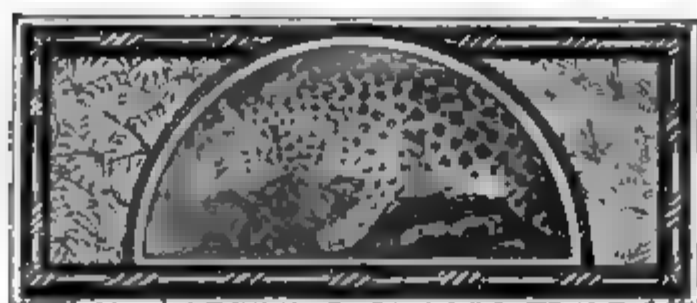
A HAUSA WOMAN.

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leather also is an important article of commerce, being excellently tanned, and much used for a variety of purposes; the skins of goats and sheep, which are usually dyed red, are exported far and wide, and the softness of the leather (produced by a lengthy process of manipulation) makes it invaluable for such things as slippers, bags, and coverings for boxes—in fact, a great quantity of it passes into North Africa, and is nothing more nor less than the Morocco leather of commerce. The peculiar thing about these Kano industries is that the place contains no big factories, and there is nothing to show that it is a manufacturing town, all the weaving and tanning being carried on in the homes of the working classes. Besides these there are many minor industries, which, however, it is not necessary now to touch on; we have said enough to show that travellers have not exaggerated the importance of Kano when describing it as “the most famous market in all Tropical Africa”—“the London and the Manchester of the Soudan.” It is perhaps needless to mention that the Hausas are responsible for the state of prosperity at which Kano has arrived; they alone furnish the industrial class and the merchants, the Fulahs preferring the excitements of slave-raiding—always a most lucrative employment. These raids are directed against the small pagan villages in the neighbourhood of the town, and the Mohammedan Hausas are not molested, the ruling class being clever enough to understand their value. The Fulahs, however, regard the Hausas (although of the same religion as themselves) as an inferior race, which is only natural, considering the ease with which the country was conquered.

In the neighbourhood of the capital and for a distance of even eighty to a hundred miles in all directions, is a perfect garden, and nothing strikes the traveller to Kano so much as this vast expanse of cultivation. Whether he approaches the great city from the north, south, east,

or west, the same sight greets him; hitherto he has seen nothing like it in Africa, for the most fertile lands in other parts are mere patches of cultivation compared with the province of Kano. Acres of Guinea corn are succeeded by acres of Indian corn, wheat, rice, or other cereals; then follows a stretch of cotton and millet, the two sown together in alternate rows, so that the latter may protect the former when young from the fierce rays of the sun; here is a field of indigo, there a plantation of cassava (manioc), or of ground-nuts, while beyond again is a veritable kitchen garden well stocked with peas, beans, bananas, sweet potatoes, onions, and every variety of vegetable and herb. All these crops are produced with little actual labour beyond sowing and reaping; the hoe is the only agricultural implement, and the soil is hardly turned and never dressed; the rest being left to nature. Valuable trees also stand scattered among the corn fields, and from them the farmer obtains, simply for the gathering, many saleable articles. Such are the shea-butter tree, the locust, the gambier, the tamarind, the baobab, and a species of plum-tree. Silk-worms feed on the tamarind leaves, and bees in great quantities nest in the trees near the villages, being carefully preserved for the sake of their honey and wax; while the pastoral tribes possess large herds and flocks. It is a land of plenty, a land literally flowing with milk and honey, though the rose cannot be said to be without its thorn even here; for the slave-raider is ever ready to pounce down on the pagan cultivator, and rob him of his hard-earned gains, if not also of his liberty.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE FULAH EMPIRE (*continued*).

BETWEEN the towns of Kano and Sokoto lie two once-important provinces, viz. Katsena and Zanfara, though neither now to be compared with Kano, which, as we said above, reaped the advantage of Katsena's decline. The reason of this decline was the invasion of the Fulahs; for, prior to 1807, the capital of Katsena was the great commercial *entrepôt* of the Soudan. The Hausas of Katsena resisted fiercely, and for seven years succeeded in maintaining their independence; only at length, however, to be starved into submission by their Fulah enemies. These seven years of continuous warfare, followed by a further lengthy period of unrest, drove away all the Arab merchants, and diverted the northern trade to the more inland town of Kano; and Katsena has never been able to recover its position. The town itself, though sparsely inhabited,¹ is surrounded by a solid wall, forming almost a perfect square of sides three miles in length, and having eight gateways; its appearance is that of desolation; for, with the exception of about a square mile in the north-east corner, nearly the whole of the vast enclosed space is an abandoned

¹ The small amount of trade still carried on with the outside world is almost entirely in the direction of Nupé, to which there is a good camel route.

waste. The country surrounding the town also shows signs of the unfortunate state of affairs; for the still unsubdued Hausas of Gober and Maradi are constantly planning war-like excursions with the object of regaining from the Fulahs the kingdoms which they have conquered. The villages are few and far between, and generally strongly fortified; cultivation is scanty; and the people everywhere live in terror of the numerous bands of robbers. Zanfara, the province which adjoins Katsena on the west, extends northwards to Gober, and suffers also at the hands of the Goberis and Maradis. It possesses no actual capital, the people of the old capital, Zurmi, having rebelled against their Fulah masters soon after the death of Othman the Reformer, since which time the Sultan has considered it advisable to keep the province under his direct supervision. Governors are appointed to the principal towns, and the Sariki N'Saffara (at present the eldest son of the Sultan) is responsible that they do not become disaffected. Like Katsena, the country is now depopulated, and in all directions are to be seen the ruins of towns and villages, and a wasted land—a condition of things which is the more remarkable when we consider that Zanfara is the nearest province to the capital of the empire.

About the minor Sokoto provinces, such as Kebbi, Daura, Gober, and Kwontagora,¹ there is nothing of interest to relate; we will therefore pass to the capital (or rather capitals) of the great Sultan el Mumenin. The city of Sokoto, as the reader will remember, was founded by Othman Dan Fodio, who had previously established himself at Gando

¹ A portion of Kebbi belongs to Gando. The capital of Daura lies about 100 miles north-east of the town of Katsena, and was once a flourishing Hausa town, where resided Dodo, the chief Hausa deity; Gober (capital Maradi) is situated between Sokoto and the Sahara. Kwontagora is about sixty miles from the left bank of the Middle Niger.

and at Sifawa,¹ neither of which apparently pleased him. In eventually fixing on Sokoto, he was influenced by various considerations; the site had the advantage of high ground, the neighbourhood was well watered by a river² and its tributaries, and here the Sultan would be in a more central position for looking after the different provinces of his vast empire. Sokoto, therefore, became the capital, and remains such, in name at any rate, at present, though the Sultan and his court have for many years resided at the town of Wurno, twenty miles away. The walls built by Sultan Bello to protect his capital from the Goberis and others of the Hausas whom he and his father, the Jehadi, had only partially subdued, are twenty feet in height, and enclose a regular square, each side of which is three thousand yards in length. As a further defence, Sokoto has a dry ditch outside the wall, and admittance to the city is gained by eight gates, two on each side. In the days of Othman, the whole interior space was thickly populated—at one time 120,000 inhabitants; with the removal of the court to Wurno, however, the population rapidly decreased, and Barth (1853) estimated it at only 20,000. The high ground lies to the north of the city, and the market-place on a rocky slope in the north-east angle, while the former palace is situated at a short distance from the eastern gates. In the south-west corner of the city are the remains of a once-famous mosque, adjacent to which is the shrine of the great Othman, still visited by pious Fulah pilgrims, who regard it as a local Mecca. As a commercial town, Sokoto is of small account, though it is the rendezvous of merchants from all parts, and

¹ Gando is about fifty-five miles south-west, Sifawa eighteen miles south, of Sokoto.

² The Mayo Kebbi (called by the Hausas Goulbi N'Kebbi, or Goulbi N'Sokoto). It enters the Middle Niger at a point opposite Gumba, about 100 miles above Boussa.

its market often exhibits a fair stock of merchandise, the more important articles on sale being slaves, horses, cattle, iron, and leather articles.¹ Still, Sokoto as a great metropolis has ceased to exist; in fact, at the present day it is quite a minor town, remarkable merely as possessing the name by which the empire is known, and as a place of pilgrimage.

Wurno, the real capital, was built, in 1831, by Sultan Atiku, who deemed it more suitable than Sokoto as a base of operations for holding in check the Goberis and Maradis. It is not by any means a large town, containing not more than 6000 inhabitants, but as the seat of government it is of some consequence. It stands on a hill,² 150 feet or so above the surrounding country, and is barely three-quarters of a square mile in area; but it is considered far more healthy than Sokoto, which enjoys anything but a good reputation in this respect. In general shape it is a square, with sides of about 1000 yards, though the north wall has been rounded off to accommodate itself to the configuration of the hill. Like Sokoto, each side has two gates,³ a little distance outside which are the wells which supply the town with water, while on the west and north flow streams, draining into the Sokoto River (lower in its course known as the Mayo Kebbi). The residence of the Sultan—the Sariki N'Musulmya—is in the centre of the town, and the market-place (with wall and ditch) is situated about half a mile without the south-west angle of the city wall. The appearance of Wurno differs in no way from other Fulah

¹ Bridles and horse trappings, bags, cushions, and slippers.

² Sandstone.

³ It must not be imagined that the gates of a Fulah town are to be compared with, for instance, the Cashmere Gate at Delhi; they are incapable of resistance, and, being usually only openings in the wall, are practically the weak points.



11WUBNO, CAPITAL OF THE FULAH EMPIRE. N

towns, there being, as usual, no streets, but merely a mass of enclosures containing circular mud huts with beehive-like thatched roofs, the whole well shaded by large and handsome trees. The place merits no lengthier description than we have bestowed on it, for as the capital of a most remarkable African empire it is decidedly disappointing, and probably the only reason why the Sultan has never thought fit to transfer his court to Kano is the fear that by so doing the Goberis would be given an opportunity of driving home the wedge whose thin end has, for many years, been pushed well to the front. Gober is undoubtedly the weak spot in the Fulah Empire, which, considering that it was the State in which Othman commenced his *jihad*, is strange; yet, so far, no Sultan has been strong enough to reduce the Goberis to complete submission. The task is too extensive, since, if driven back, this border tribe has behind it the whole of the Sahara to retire into.

The above is a rough outline of the Sokoto division of the Fulah Empire; we must now concern ourselves with the Gando¹ division, in reality of far less importance, though as having within its limits two provinces which have recently been *en évidence*, not to be passed over. It will be remembered that, as stated in the last chapter, when Othman Dan Fodio had completed his conquests, he divided up the various provinces, and apportioned them to his son and nephew, the latter being proclaimed first Sultan of the Gando,² or

¹ Barth (1853) enumerates the various provinces of Gando as follows:—"the western half of Kebbi, Mauri or Arewa, Zaberma, Dendina (comprising Kenga-koy and Zagha), a great part of Gurma (comprising the provinces of Galaijo, Torode, Yagha, and Libtako), with a small portion of Borgu or Barba, a large portion of Yoruba with the capital Alori or Ilorin, and, on the east side of the river, the provinces of Yauri, and Nupé or Nyfi."

² Mahomed Ben Abdallah, the first Sultan of Gando, was succeeded by his brother, Mahomed Wani, after whom another brother, Khalilu,

western, half of the Fulah Empire, extending from the borders of Sokoto across the Middle Niger and as far south as Ilorin, or what is now the northern boundary of the hinterland of Lagos Colony. Of this vast territory the Sultan is still the nominal ruler, and the vassal states continue to pay him tribute, though, as a matter of fact, his dominion over such provinces as Nupé and Ilorin is but lightly felt; moreover, he himself pays homage to his religious superior of Sokoto, and, being heavily subsidized by the Royal Niger Company, is, for all practical purposes, a servant of Great Britain. His capital is at Gando, a town situated about eighty miles from the Middle Niger, in a narrow valley (through which flows a tributary of the Sokoto River), and commanded on all sides by ranges of hills. It is of no very great size, but the land within the walls, being well irrigated and excessively fertile, is a mass of cultivation, and the dwellings of the people are almost entirely hidden by the wide-spreading trees and groves of bananas. For its fruits and vegetables¹ Gando is remarkable, and it is certainly a most picturesque spot, though its market is small, and there is nothing about the place to mark it as the capital of a great empire. Yet its neighbourhood bespeaks prosperity, for large farms and villages, surrounded by a considerable amount of cultivation, lie scattered in all directions, and the roads leading to Sokoto, Jega, and other large towns, at all times present a busy scene. Like Sokoto, it is troubled by raiding bands of independent Hausas, and the villages and towns of the home province are continually subjected to the attacks of the Argungus and others, against whom Gando does not take anything like such strong measures as Sokoto.

came to the throne (1836), and he it was whom Barth visited in his capital in 1853.

¹ Bananas, dates, the fruit of the dum and deleb palm, shea-butter, tamarind, onions, yams, peas, beans, &c.

Of the majority of the provinces tributary to Gando it will be sufficient here to mention merely the geographical situation, reserving a more lengthy description for the two great States of Nupé and Ilorin (Yoruba). Gando, the capital, is in Western Kebbi, the divided province, which also has the honour of including, within its eastern portion, the city of Sokoto. North of Kebbi (which comprises all the country between Sokoto and the Middle Niger) lies Mauri or Arewa; between Mauri and the Niger is Zaberma or Zerma (just north of the notorious boundary town of Say); wedged in between the last three provinces and the great river stretches Dendina; while the riverside province of Yauri¹ separates Kebbi from Nupé. Across the Niger, i.e. on its right bank, we have Gurma on the north, with Borgu² adjoining it on the south, and further south still Ilorin or Yoruba. The number of Europeans who have visited all or any of these inland Fulah (or Hausa) states can be almost counted on one's fingers; with Nupé matters are different, for it has held continuous intercourse with Englishmen for close on forty years, and Ilorin is no longer a *terra incognita*. Both are destined to play a great part in the future history of Nigeria, if not also of Great Britain in Africa.

The earliest information about Nupé was that collected by Clapperton during his first expedition (1822-4), and consisted chiefly of Sultan Bello's description of the country, from which we learn that it was generally considered that the pagan Nupés³ originally came from Katshena, Zaria, Kano,

¹ The people who murdered Mungo Park were natives of Yauri, opposite Boussa.

² *Vide* Chapter XII. Only a very small portion of Borgu is claimed by Gando, and even this claim is more than doubtful.

³ The tribal marks of the Nupé pagans are three elliptical gashes from the temple to the mouth, and one horizontal gash across nose and cheeks.

and other parts. The first European known to have reached Nupé was Hornemann,¹ but as he left no records of his travels, it was not until Clapperton undertook his second expedition (1825-7) that any authentic account of the country was forthcoming. Lander (1830) wrote fully of his experiences in Nupé, and as it was the first Mohammedan kingdom met with by the subsequent Government expeditions, a considerable amount of historical information has been handed down by their chroniclers. Its story since the Fulah conquest is not unlike that of most of the other provinces of the Empire, though it has had the advantage of commercial intercourse with Europeans for a much longer period, and even if the pagan aborigines have not benefited thereby, it is certain that the power of the Mohammedan rulers has increased very considerably, so much so, in fact that, for many years past, the jurisdiction of Gando over Nupé has greatly diminished.

To understand anything of Nupé² politics, it is necessary to become acquainted with certain matters of history, though not of a period further back than the beginning of the present century. After the country had fallen into the hands of the Fulahs, civil wars were frequent, the Pagans endeavouring to recover their country from their Muslim oppressors. About 1818, Nasa,³ king of Nupé, died, when his son Mamagia⁴ claimed the throne. A rival, however, arose in Jemata,

¹ *Vide* page 18.

² Other names :—Nufo, Nyfee, Nife, Nupaysee, Yufi, Anuperi, Yowi; the Hausas call it Takpa, Tapua, Tapa, or Tacwa ; it is also sometimes known by the name of its capital, Bida.

³ McWilliam (1841) calls him Musa, though probably erroneously. Musa, or Mallam Musa, was another name for Mallam Dendo.

⁴ Magia, or Mamagia, a contraction of Mallam Magia. Lander says that Mamagia and Edrisa were brothers (the latter the elder), and that Edrisa actually succeeded his father, Nasa, and was acknowledged king by the nation. Mamagia rebelled, and obtained the aid of Bello, of Sokoto, when Edrisa was defeated and driven from Nupé.

the son of Nasa's eldest sister, and civil war broke out. Mamagia having obtained the assistance of the Fulahs, routed and killed Jemata, whose son, Ederesi,¹ then took up his father's cause, and carried on the war. In 1826, Clapperton found the war in full progress, and Mamagia (or, as he calls him, Mahomed el Magia) getting the best of it, since his unbounded generosity won over the people to his side; and the superior fighting qualities of the Fulah horsemen, who aided him, easily defeated Ederesi's half-trained Nupé pagans. The war was, however, carried on for several years, until eventually, but not until 1841, matters were settled by the Fulahs, and the country was divided between Mamagia and Ederesi, both of whom were made vassals of Sumo,² king of Rabba, a son of the famous Mallam Dendo (who died in 1842), and grandson of Sultan Bello. Mamagia's head-quarters were, with Sumo, at Rabba, while Ederesi resided near Egga, and, on the death of both Mamagia and Ederesi, Sumo proclaimed himself Emir of all Nupé.

History is ever repeating itself, and in these petty Mohammedan kingdoms the Koranic law of fraternal succession provides a never-ending cause for dynastic squabbles—the revolt of one brother against another. They are born of different mothers [very frequently of different tribes], and each imagines that, with the support of his mother's people, he will be able to gain the throne. Instances will be found in every Soudan State, and Nupé is no exception; we have already seen how the first two rulers acted, and on their death without heirs a similar state of affairs at once commenced. Sumo, the new Emir of Nupé, was, as we have stated, a son of Mallam Dendo, who also had (by a Nupé

¹ Lander, Laird, and Oldfield call him Edrisa; Schön says his name was Ezu Issa (i.e. King Issa), and that he was king of Barra.

² Also known as Sumozaki, a contraction of Sumo sariki (Sumo the king), and as Osman, or Othman, Saki.

wife) another son, named Dasaba or Masaba.¹ Now, before Sumo had been established by the Fulahs in Rabba, a quarrel had arisen between the half-brothers, the result of which was that Masaba fled to Ladi, on the southern bank of the Middle Niger. Here he gained great influence over the Nupés, principally owing to the fact that his mother was of their race, whereas Sumo was of Fulah parentage on both sides, and by 1845 matters were ripe for rebellion. Masaba attacked Rabba, defeated his brother (who fled into the Hausa country), sacked and burnt the town, and proclaimed himself Emir of Nupé, with his capital at Ladi. But the people who had assisted him soon discovered that they had made a mistake, for Masaba, once established on the throne, turned out to be cruel and tyrannical in all his dealings with them; consequently, in 1854, the country rose, and drove their king into exile, appointing Baziba, son of Mamagia, to be their ruler. Masaba went to Ilorin, where he was well received by the Fulahs, and in the course of a few months he persuaded the Nupés to receive him back. He now moved his court from Ladi to Rabba, which had grown up again to be a town of some size, and here he remained for the next few years.

This brings us to the time when Baikie took up his consular appointment at Lokoja,² and it is due to Masaba to say that the goodwill which he showed towards the little British settlement was the means of firmly establishing our commercial position on the Niger, though probably the frequent presents which he received acted as an incentive to his friendship. As a ruler he was never popular among his own people, but he took the greatest interest in the white trader, and endeavoured to increase his own wealth and power in the land by commercial transactions. His capital was

¹ A contraction either of Mallam Saba or Mohamed Saba.

² *Vide* Chapter XI.

Rabba (on the left bank of the Middle Niger), a place which, from its situation, apparently fulfilled every requisite of the chief town of an important province;¹ whether Masaba disliked the town we are not told, but certain it is that, at the first opportunity, he lost no time in leaving it. The Emir's commander-in-chief was one Omoru, who, after one of his periodical slaving expeditions, founded the town of Bida, and, being pleased with his choice of a site, persuaded his master to pay him a visit, the result of which was that Masaba proclaimed it his capital, and forthwith transferred his court to the spot.² Omoru was now in high favour, and as a reward for the founding of the new capital the Emir ordained that he should succeed to the throne at his own death. This actually occurred in 1873, and Omoru reigned over Nupé until 1882, when he was succeeded by Maleké, a Masaba. The elevation to the throne of Omoru, who was not even of royal descent, naturally created disaffection, and this extraordinary decree of Masaba has given rise to no small amount of trouble; for not content with making Omoru emir, he made a further settlement as to the succession, viz. that after Omoru there should be successively two Masaba emirs, then one Omoru emir, to be followed again by two Masabas, and so on. All this, in a country where intrigue is the very essence of life, produces a state of affairs frequently verging on civil war, though, fortunately, the presence of the Royal Niger Company keeps matters fairly straight.³ Still, to the outsider Nupé

¹ The tombs of the Nupé kings are still to be seen at Rabba.

² After Masaba had established himself at Bida, his treatment of his pagan subjects was so harsh that he was again driven from the throne. He then sought the aid of Sokoto and regained his position.

³ The Emir Omoru was in danger of being dethroned in 1882, and that the rebellion was put down was entirely due to the National African Company, who supported Omoru with an armed force.

politics are most confusing; the main points, however, to remember are that there are two factions: the descendants of the interloper Omoru and the royal house of Masaba. Until quite recently there were always three grades of heirship to the throne, with distinct titles; thus the first heir was known as the Shiaba,¹ the second as the Prince Potun (both Masabas), and the third as the Makum² (the eldest son of Omoru). During the reign of Maleké, the first title ceased to exist, principally because the Omoru faction successively poisoned off anyone who filled it, and when Maleké died, in 1895, the Potun, Abu Bekri (or Bokhari), became Emir.³ It was with this latter ruler that the Royal Niger Company settled accounts in 1897,⁴ and on his deposition the Makum, Mohammed (Ororu), was installed as Emir (February 5th, 1897). Masaba's arrangement, therefore, has so far been carried out.

The actual limits of Nupé, until 1897, could not be at all distinctly defined. A slave-raid among the pagans added, for the time being, several hundreds of square miles to the Emir's dominions, which, however, if not considered of value, were left alone. On the outskirts of the kingdom, therefore, there were vast tracts, of which the heathen population itself could scarcely say whether or not they were vassals of the Mohammedan ruler of Nupé. The only thing that they could truly affirm was that all Mohammedans were their bitterest foes, who, when opportunity offered, would raid their villages, even though they paid tribute to the Emir. Roughly speaking, in the name Nupé is comprised all the country on both banks of the Middle Niger, from the confluence at Lokoja, up to Borgu and Kambari. Inland its southern boundary

¹ Heir-apparent.

² His three elder brothers had died.

³ Commander-in-Chief.

⁴ *Vide* Chapter XV.

adjoins the Yoruba kingdom of Ilorin ; Borgu, Kambari, and Yauri, bound it on the north ; Gbari hems it in on the north-east ; while, on the east, it may be said to extend to Nassarawa and the country of the pagan Basas, on the Benué River. The country everywhere has the appearance of great fertility, and, except that the track of the slave-raider is marked in all directions by ruined towns and villages, one would imagine Nupé to be a most prosperous kingdom. The bulk of the population is pagan, still unconverted by their conquerors, though near the large towns, presided over by the Faithful, Mohammedanism is professed in a more or less half-hearted manner. That the Nupés—i.e. the pagans—are a magnificent race, both physically and mentally, is apparent to anyone who visits their country, though unchecked oppression has gradually told on their natural characteristics. As blacksmiths, workers in brass, leather, and glass, as weavers, and as canoe-builders, they probably excel all the tribes of Central Africa. Their workmanship shows a skill and taste in design which, although somewhat crude, lacks only development to become artistic. Brass bowls, vessels of various patterns, trumpets, swords, and spears, saddlery, embroidered slippers, bags, baskets, and glass armlets and bangles are amongst their specialties ; whilst, in the country parts, there is evidence enough of their taste for agriculture. A peculiar trait in the character of the heathen Nupé is his cheerfulness under the most adverse circumstances ; his village may be raided by the Mohammedans, and his friends and relations carried off into slavery, yet in a few days he will return from his hiding-place, rebuild his house, and settle down as if nothing had happened.

The principal towns and villages are situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the main river or its numerous

tributaries. Bida,¹ the capital, lies some thirty-five miles inland from the left bank of the Middle Niger, and is reached, in the rainy season, by ascending the Wonangi river to a town of the same name; but in the dry season the journey from the Niger is usually made by road, and takes about two days. The city covers an area of about four square miles, is circular in shape, and is surrounded by a mud wall and ditch. Like Gando, it is built in a hollow, commanded on all sides by low hills, while two small streams, flowing from the south and west, unite within the town before proceeding to join the River Kaduna, which passes within half a mile or so of the northern walls. There are altogether ten gates, the largest being known as the Hausa gate on the north, the Ilorin gate on the west, the Bomosu Barra gate on the south-west, and the Wonangi gate on the south-east. Compared with other Fulah provincial capitals, Bida is (or was before the recent war) architecturally remarkable; outwardly it is very similar to other towns, with the usual mud-enclosed palaces, mat-enclosed dwellings, tree-shaded open spaces, and market-places; but the interiors of some of the palaces display an amount of artistic taste surprising in such an out-of-the-way part of the world. The hard clay of the walls is beautifully polished, and in many cases ceramic ornamentation is found; while the Moorish ceiling and the horseshoe arch are by no means uncommon. The only other town of any importance in Northern Nupé (i.e. the portion of the kingdom situated on the left bank of the Middle Niger) is Rabba—the old capital, and perhaps the only reason that it is still of importance is that the Royal Niger Company has here its one trading-station on this bank of the river. In reality the place is

¹ Lieutenant C. F. S. Vandeleur, D.S.O. (1897), made the mean latitude of Bida 9° 5' 13" N.; the longitude 6° 1' E.



A NUTTY VILLAGE ♦

[T: from 1940-2010]

nothing more than a large village, and, with the exception of the tombs of the kings, there is nothing to show that it was at one time the capital of a flourishing state and a trade centre. Its appearance is, however, decidedly picturesque, the clusters of little grass huts descending to the water's edge, and standing out against a background of handsome dark green trees, while just above the town high sandstone cliffs cast ruddy reflections across the far-extending river.

The greater part of Southern Nupé—the portion of the kingdom situated on the right bank of the Middle Niger—passed into the hands of the emir only comparatively recently, and was for many years practically the Nupé slaving preserve. It adjoins the kingdom of Ilorin on the south and west, while towards the east it stretches an indefinite distance into the country inhabited by various pagan tribes, notably the Yagbas, the Ogidis, and the Kukurukus. In this wide tract there are several large towns, most of which owe their extent to having been hitherto war camps, or bases of operations, for the Fulah slave-raiders—now, thanks to the recent successful expedition of the Royal Niger Company, a thing of the past. To Egga,¹ which lies on the right bank of the river some three hundred miles above Lokoja, this old order of things never applied, for, ever since the white trader extended his influence to Nupé, Egga has been the chief trading port of the kingdom. That it has frequently suffered at the hands of the emir and his Fulah warriors is true, and, though more than once burnt to the ground, it has always been immediately rebuilt. Situated as it is on the direct route between Kano and Ilorin, it naturally forms a great meeting-

¹ The journey from Egga to Bida can be accomplished in one day, though as a rule it occupies two or even three.

place for native merchants, who are, doubtless, also attracted to the spot by the knowledge that they can here purchase European goods at a far cheaper rate than anywhere inland. Another town of some consequence on this bank is Shonga—a starting-point for Ilorin, and within three days' march of that town. A small navigable river flows from Shonga Town into the Niger, which it enters at a point almost opposite Rabba, and traders going south adopt this route, as it shortens the overland journey from the Niger to Ilorin and Lagos by two days—a matter of some consideration when the cost of carriers has to be taken into account. Of Nupé and its towns there is little more to be said, except that the startling events of 1897 have brought about vast changes in the country with immense benefits for the pagan population.¹

The kingdom of Ilorin, which, like Nupé, has been much under discussion of late years, is the southernmost Fulah province, and is situated between Nupé and Yorubaland proper, i.e. the hinterland of Lagos Colony.² At one time it formed a part of the pagan kingdom of Yoruba,³ but was incorporated into the Fulah empire, at the beginning of the present century, by Dan Fodio, who, however, never completely conquered it. After the Reformer's death, Mohammedan influence gradually spread south; the town of Ilorin

¹ *Vide* Chapter XV.

² Chapter VII.

³ Sultan Bello says of the Yorubas:—"They originated from the remnants of the children of Canaan, who were of the tribe of Nimrod. The cause of their establishment in the west of Africa was, as it is stated, in consequence of their being driven by Yaa-Rooba, son of Kahtan, out of Arabia, to the western coast between Egypt and Abyssinia. From that spot they advanced into the interior of Africa, till they reached Yarba, where they fixed their residence." The tribal marks of the pagan Yorubas were originally several fine cuts along the cheeks, but nowadays the practice of marking appears to be going out of fashion.

was proclaimed the capital of the province,¹ and the Fulahs overran the whole of Yorubaland—almost to the sea. For many years the Yorubas remained subservient to the Fulahs, though Islam made but few converts among the southern tribes, and eventually the people of Ibadan raised a rebellion, when, with the assistance of the neighbouring pagan tribes, they succeeded in driving the Fulahs back to their capital at Ilorin. This event occurred some forty years ago, since which time hardly a year of peace has been known,² though, now that the entire country has passed under the protection either of the Lagos Colony or of the Royal Niger Company, a more satisfactory state of affairs may be expected, and the Mohammedans will have to adopt some other methods of conversion than by the sword.³

The Ilorin country is, perhaps, one of the most pleasant and fertile parts of West Africa south of the Middle Niger, with a climate free from the pestilential malaria of the coast. Situated in the basin of the Niger, it is well watered by numerous rivers and streams which, in the wet season (June to October) can only be crossed by canoe-ferry, though at other times generally fordable. Vast rolling plains alternate with low ranges of forest-clad hills, the bush being in places dense, in others almost park-like in appearance. The paths, from village to village and from farm to farm, are nowhere more than three feet wide, and in the rainy season are fringed with coarse grass, often growing to a height of eight or ten

¹ This was brought about by a Mohammedan priest named Alimi, who persuaded the pagan king, Afouja, to ask the Fulahs to aid him in his frontier wars. Vide *Up the Niger*, page 172.

² Vide Chapter VII.

³ The first Fulah Emir of Ilorin was Abdul Salami (son of Alimi), about 1831; he was succeeded by his brother Sitta, 1840—1858; after whom the following have reigned:—Zobeiru (son of Abdul Salami), 1858—1867; Alihu (son of Sitta), 1867—1891; Suliman (son of Alihu), 1891.

feet. The villages are at no great distance apart, and many of them consist of merely one or two adjacent farms, for the people are mainly agriculturists, and pay great attention to the cultivation of the land which they have cleared in the neighbourhood of their homes. Yams grow in abundance, and form the principal food of the inhabitants, while plantains, bananas, millet, Guinea corn, Indian corn, sugar-cane, ground-nuts, sweet potatoes, and tobacco, are extensively cultivated. Yet the country is so well peopled that it only supplies sufficient food-stuff for its own wants. Travelling from the north one is much struck by the difference in appearance between the buildings of the Ilorins and those of their neighbours, the Nupés. The latter are all circular in shape, with the neatest of conical roofs, while the former are long, low, and untidily-thatched sheds. Towns, villages, and farms are constructed on the same principle, and consist of a high enclosure wall of mud, on the inner side of which are ranged the dwelling apartments, each family having a separate enclosure, with a central court-yard containing numerous little mud granaries. The majority of the inhabitants are pagan negroes of the darkest colour, though the upper classes of the country are Mohammedans, and, being of a lighter colour than the rest, claim descent from the Fulahs, who in many cases have married heathen wives. The men are fine, sturdy Africans, good horsemen, and inured to hardship; while the women, whether slaves or free-born, are well proportioned, cheerful, and light-hearted. In this latter respect the Ilorins, both men and women, are remarkable; they appear to have few cares, and every evening, from dusk to midnight, their towns and villages are filled with the sounds of revelry, music and dancing being the most popular forms of amusement. In spite of all this, they are extremely superstitious, and much in the power of their priests, who prey on the simple pagan

in various ways, the principal of which is the maintenance of a staff of persons disguised in strange garments, who profess to be "ghosts," and who carry out the commands of the priest—even to committing murder. Amongst these pagans, also, is a sect worshipping thunder and lightning, or the god Shango, whose votaries are distinguished by a necklace of small white beads; these people are considered to possess the power of directing lightning to any object they choose, and are consequently much dreaded, even by the followers of the Prophet. Neither is superstition wanting in the Mohammedan, who adorns himself with charms of all kinds to ward off disasters and to bring good luck, and who has a considerable amount of faith in the pagan fetishes. To such an extent is this carried that, for many years, an old pagan priestess (a captive from the Borgus) was maintained at the Court of Ilorin, and virtually ruled the kingdom.

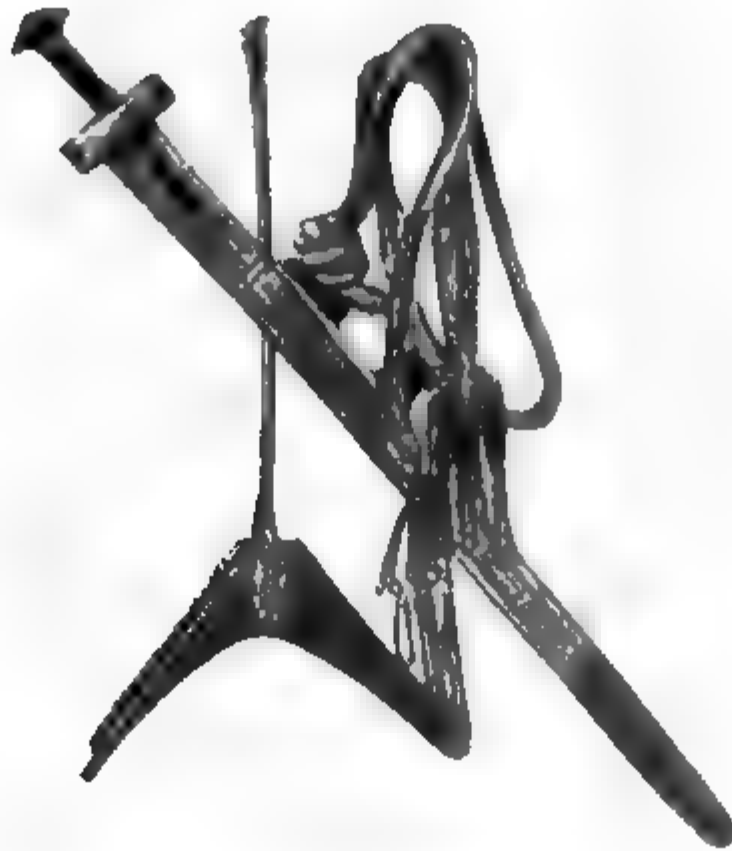
Ilorin,¹ the capital of the country, lies about seventy miles south of the Middle Niger, and is a town of considerable size, though not now by any means as prosperous as it at one time was, its decline having been brought about by the continuous misrule of the Fulahs. Previous to 1889, when Major Claude MacDonald conducted a mission to Ilorin, the accounts given of the place were absurdly exaggerated; it was described as the largest city in the country, as the "Mecca of West Africa," and possessed of no less than three thousand mosques. As a matter of fact, although its dilapidated mud wall is some nine miles in circumference, much of the enclosed space is meadowland or cultivation, and as far as mosques are concerned, there is only one of any impor-

¹ Latitude 8° 30' N.; 1300 feet above sea level. It was originally founded, about 1790, by fugitive slaves from different parts of Yoruba, each tribe occupying its own quarter of the town, and being represented in the government by a chief. With the advent of the Fulahs all this came to an end.

tance, and even that would be regarded by Mohammedans of other parts of the world as nothing better than a barn. Still, Ilorin is not without its charms, for there is something of the picturesque in the groups of shady baobab and other trees which grow everywhere among the huts of the natives, and spread their wide branches over the open market-places. The palace of the Emir and the houses of the principal Baloguns, or war-chiefs, are surrounded by solid and high walls, within which are other enclosures, with patches of cultivation and occasionally a wild garden. Roads run from the centre of the city in all directions, passing through the numerous gates,¹ and into the country like spokes from the nave of a wheel; while the River Asa, flowing towards the Niger, receives, a little north of Ilorin, two tributaries, on the ground between which the city stands. Commercially Ilorin must always remain from its situation of very considerable importance, all trade between the Niger and Lagos passing through the town; moreover, its markets are visited by the surrounding pagan tribes, and now that the country has commenced to settle down under the new administration, controlled by the Niger Company, a great impetus will doubtless be given to the development of the resources of a most productive land. Such natural products as shea-butter, rubber, and gum are abundant; iron is found in large quantities; numerous farms are already in a high state of cultivation; while the pagan people are naturally industrious, and as expert in their various manufactures as even the aboriginal inhabitants of Nupé. One thing only has been wanting all these years to make both the town of Ilorin and the whole of the province thoroughly prosperous—peace. Hitherto plunder and oppression have overshadowed the land: to be robbed of his property, if not of his freedom, was the

¹ There are twelve actual gateways; but about a mile of the wall in the north-east corner has disappeared.

prospect of every pagan ; and even the Hausa merchant trading between the Niger and the coast had to submit to heavy blackmail, or run the risk of his caravan being looted on the road. All this, we trust, has now passed away for ever, and the outlook of Ilorin is full of great promise. A railway from Lagos is already in course of construction, whereby, it is reasonable to suppose, within a few years this vast fertile tract will benefit enormously ; its produce will be able to reach the coast at small cost, and the peace of the country will be doubly assured.





CHAPTER XV.

THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY, CHARTERED AND LIMITED.

THE declaration, in June, 1885, of a Protectorate of the Niger Territories, referred to in a former chapter, coupled with the signature, in the previous February, of the General Act of the Conference of Berlin, gave to Great Britain the whole of the coast line between Lagos and the Cameroons, and the country inland for an unlimited distance. The National African Company had already, as we have seen, made great strides in developing trade, and had acquired extensive rights from the native chiefs, but that part of the Protectorate in which the Company traded had so far no recognized form of administration, and as a simple trading concern the Company had no ability, without the sanction of Great Britain, to receive from the natives "sovereign rights" concessions which would affect the subjects of any other European power. Two courses lay open to the British Government, if it intended to retain the Protectorate, viz. direct administration (either under the Foreign Office or the Colonial Office), or government by charter. As early as 1881 the National African Company had endeavoured to obtain a charter, but it was refused chiefly on the grounds that the Company was too small to be entrusted with such responsibilities. This difficulty was overcome in 1882 by the

capital of the Company being raised to £1,000,000,¹ but there was still another difficulty—the presence of the French firms on the Lower Niger. At length the way was made clear, and the National African Company received its Royal Charter in July, 1886, when a little later in the same year it adopted the more appropriate name by which it has since been known.

The British Government had thus, by delegating its authority to the Company, evaded the inauguration of an enormous and costly system of administration over regions about which little or nothing was known. It would be out of place here to discuss whether this step was wisely taken, though the matter of government by Chartered Companies is one ever, nowadays, before the public, and therefore a plain statement of certain facts in connection with the subject will, at any rate, help the reader to form his own opinions, or possibly to modify them one way or another. But first it will be well to point out that the Royal Niger Company differs in two particulars from the other existing British Chartered Companies (*viz.* the British North Borneo Company and the British South African Company), in that it both trades and administers, whereas the others devote all their attention to administration; and that the Niger Company has to depend for its dividend entirely on trade profits, while the others pay their dividends out of revenue derived from taxation in one form or another. Laying aside for the moment the peculiar situation of the Niger Company, and dealing with Chartered Company government in its wide sense, we find that the arguments put forward by the supporters and opponents of the system are sufficiently weighty and numerous to fill a volume; all, then, that we

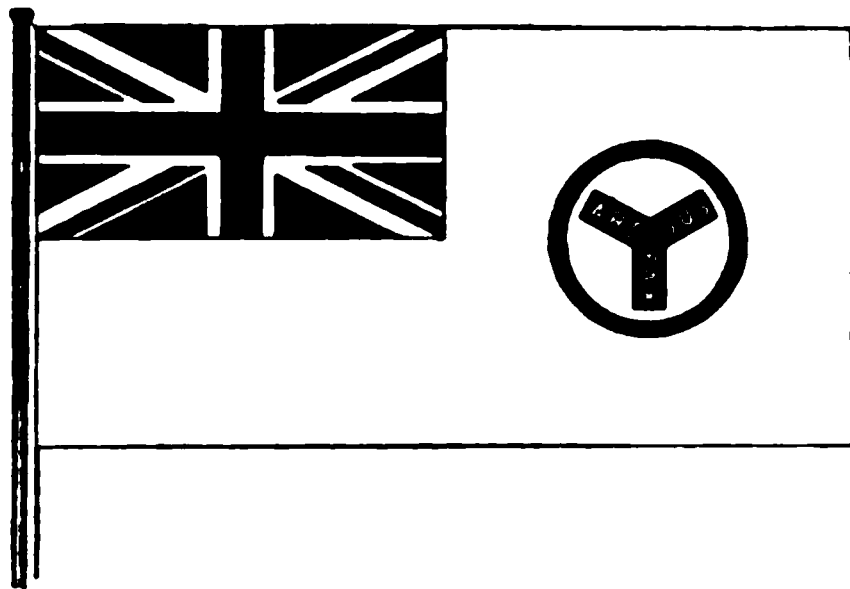
¹ The first Governor and Chairman of the Company was the Right Honourable Lord Aberdare, at that time President of the Royal Geographical Society.

can hope to do is to enumerate, without expressing an opinion one way or another, the main points on both sides. The advantages claimed for the system¹ are that there is no better method for the early development of a country; a Company will always go ahead quicker than direct Imperial government, as it is not tied down by the formality of having all its acts sanctioned by superior authority; if the Company blunders, the British Government can shift the responsibility; and, to quote the *Scotsman*, "Chartered Companies in Africa, as elsewhere, have been the best pioneers of British commerce and authority." The opponents of the system maintain that it lays Great Britain open to being seriously embroiled with adjacent European nations; that the exercise of a charter tends to over-taxation, and therefore checks rather than encourages trade; and that it is a mean device of a government to shirk responsibility, which, if not capable of undertaking, it should leave alone. With regard to a Company such as forms the subject of this chapter, the chief arguments against a charter are that it enables the Company to hold almost a monopoly of trade; that, although this monopoly is actually forbidden by the charter, it is against human nature not to use the administrative power so as to benefit the Company in the matter of trade, to the detriment of all competitors.

The granting of charters to Companies is not, as is sometimes supposed, an innovation, and in the earlier pages of this volume mention has frequently been made of various old West African Chartered Companies, though in their case the charters were almost solely for purposes of trade. The Government granted subsidies for maintaining the forts, but there was no question of governing the country or of acquiring

¹ The most ardent supporters of Chartered Company government only consider it a temporary measure, to be superseded eventually by direct Government administration.

territory, the ground on which the forts stood being rented from the natives. In India and Canada things were different, the East India Company and the Hudson Bay Company holding positions very similar to that of the Royal Niger Company, but the territories which they governed were not under the protection of Great Britain. To sum up: the situation of the Royal Niger Company (then the National African Company) on receiving its charter in 1886 was as follows:—It being the sole representative of European traders in that part of the British Niger Protectorate, was authorized by its charter to continue to carry on the various objects enumerated in its Memorandum of Association, including the power to govern, keep in order, and protect any territories of native chiefs with whom it had concluded “sovereign rights” treaties. By the numerous provisos contained in the charter, the Secretary of State retained the power of veto over any of the Company’s acts; the Company to remain British in character and domicile, not to transfer any of its benefits without sanction, to discourage and gradually abolish slavery,



THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY'S FLAG.

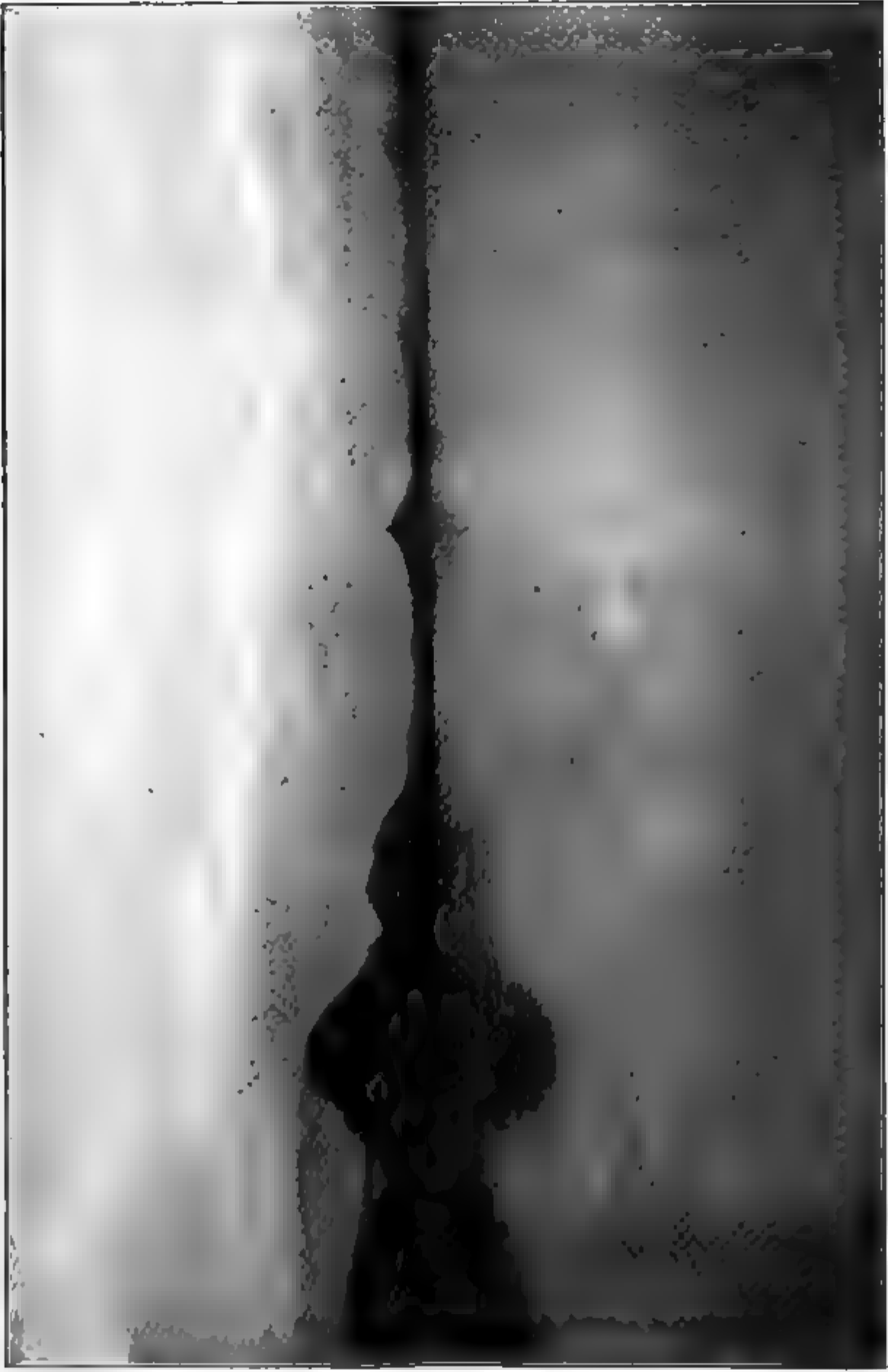
to tolerate the religion of the natives, uphold their ancient laws and customs (except in the interests of humanity), treat the natives with justice, to afford facilities for British ships in its harbours, &c., &c. Furthermore, the Company was

authorized to acquire lawfully and hold new territories, and to fly a British flag bearing its own particular device.¹ It was prohibited from setting up or granting any monopoly of trade, but, while allowing free access to all traders to markets in its territories, was permitted to levy custom duties,² &c., to an extent sufficient to defray the cost of government, administration of justice, maintenance of order, and the performance of treaty obligations, and it was granted full jurisdiction, in the interests of commerce and order, over all foreigners and British subjects in its territories. Lastly, the Crown reserved the right to revoke the charter at any time that it should think fit.

The above are, in brief, the conditions under which the Chartered Company of the Niger commenced operations. It had already concluded some 250 treaties with various independent chiefs, and it immediately set to work to organize a thorough system of administration. That this was no light task must be patent to everyone who is acquainted with the vast extent of the Company's territories and the varied character of the natives. These latter matters we have already discussed, though, before giving the reader a general idea of the working of a great Company of this kind, it may be well to say of what the Company's territories consisted at the time that the Charter was granted, or, in other words, what rights had been acquired by treaties with the natives. Its coastline extended from the Forcados river to the Nun mouth of the Niger; it possessed treaty rights over both banks of the Lower Niger, with its affluents and branches, for a distance of about ten hours' journey inland; over the whole of the

¹ The Company's flag is a white ensign, bearing in the right-hand upper corner a circle, within which is a Y-shaped figure (representing the courses of the Lower Niger, the Middle Niger, and the Benué), with the words "Ars, Jus, and Pax." See page 261.

² Accounts and particulars to be furnished whenever required by the Secretary of State.



THE RIVER BELOW THE CONFLUENCE.

| To face page 313.

Sokoto and Gando empires, and over all the various independent pagan countries on the Benué up to a distance by water of almost 1000 miles from the sea. In some essential particulars the treaties then in existence differed; for instance, "sovereign rights" clauses were not always inserted, though in all cases the Company was given the sole right to trade and mine in the country, and the native rulers agreed to have no intercourse with any foreigners except with the sanction of the Company. In return for the acquisition of these various rights, annual subsidies were to be paid to each treaty-making chief, in proportion to the size and importance of his kingdom, ranging from £2000 to a few shillings.

Now as to the organization of the Company. The chief office was established in London. Lord Aberdare was appointed Governor, and Mr. Goldie Taubman (now Sir G. Goldie) Deputy-Governor, the Board of Directors consisting of numerous well-known West African traders and others; while in the Niger itself affairs were managed by an Agent-General (Mr. David McIntosh)¹ and an efficient staff. As far as trade was concerned, the Company was already firmly established in the country, with several flourishing trading stations and a fleet of river steamers. Its first important duty, therefore, was to arrange the details for putting in order the good government of the country. A force of Hausa Constabulary was immediately raised, equipped, and officered by Europeans; a body of police was formed and distributed in detachments throughout the territories; senior executive officers, district agents, with assistants and native political agents, were appointed; and a High Court, presided over by a Chief Justice, was established at Asaba, on the Lower Niger, which became and still remains the administrative headquarters of

¹ Succeeded by Mr. Joseph Flint and Mr. William Wallace.

the Company.¹ As sanctioned by the charter, a system of taxation (duties on imports and exports, and licenses) was arranged to provide a revenue to cover the cost of administration,² and for its collection custom-house officials were placed in charge of the different stations named in the proclamation as "ports of entry." A more thorough organization it would be almost impossible to devise, and the fact that (with a few trivial exceptions) it has withstood the test of time is proof that the Company has not betrayed the trust that the Government of 1886 placed in it. Neither have its actions been concealed during this decade or more of its life, for even its most private concerns have been freely criticized in the public press; it has passed through the ordeal of a searching inquiry by a Government Commissioner, who personally inspected every establishment in the Company's territories; and its treaty rights have on several occasions become the subject of international discussion. Furthermore, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has continuously investigated everything connected with the Company. The chief point to be remembered, but so often forgotten by Englishmen anxious to find fault, is that the Royal Niger Company, whatever may have been its methods, has done, and continues to do, great and good work for the British Empire by developing new markets in an enormous tract of valuable country, and by preparing the way for direct Imperial control. It has been instrumental in adding to the possessions of Great Britain half a million square miles

¹ The headquarters of the Constabulary were at Asaba until 1889, when they were transferred to Lokoja, with a strong detachment at Ibi, on the Benué.

² This amount, of course, varies from year to year; in 1887 it was £70,000; at present it is restricted to £90,000, towards which the Royal Niger Company probably contributes not less than £85,000 as duties on its own imports and exports.

of territory, which if taken over now by the Government would probably be found to be in better order than the hinterland of any West Coast Colony.

To go back, however, to the commencement of the Chartered Company's existence. No sooner did it find itself acting in the dual capacity of trader and sovereign than its work began in earnest. Difficulties had to be faced on all sides, and from quarters least expected; not only did petty troubles arise with turbulent native tribes, but German and French free-lances stepped in and endeavoured (but unsuccessfully, be it said) to undermine the foundations of the structure that the Company was carefully raising. But of these international questions we shall at present say nothing, for they are of too great an importance to be dismissed in a few words. The minor troubles were, of course, fully expected, for it was unlikely that a people, in many cases without a vestige of civilization, would submit to the new order of things without some show of resistance. Many of their customs were such as no civilized government could permit; it was impossible for the officials to close their eyes to such inhuman barbarities as cannibalism, human sacrifices, murder of twins, and the open sale of slaves, all of which were indulged in by one or other of the Delta tribes. These matters were consequently each and all taken in hand, at first by using persuasion, and then, when that failed, by force of arms.¹ Later, there came small expeditions for punishing tribes for acts of piracy, plunder, and the like, but, considering the extent of the territories, the amount of force that it has been necessary to use has been remarkably small. While these lessons were being dealt out to the natives—they had in every instance a most salutary effect on neighbouring tribes—the Company's

¹ An account of the suppression of human sacrifices at Asaba will be found in *Up the Niger*, page 28.

agents devoted their time to improving the relations existing between themselves and the various chiefs, more especially the great Mohammedan potentates of the Fulah Empire. From year to year new treaties were made, each one gaining some new concession for the Company, until eventually the whole of the territories included in this particular British sphere of influence virtually passed into the hands of the Company. To bring this Mohammedan country within its direct jurisdiction is an undertaking at which the Company has only now arrived ; hitherto all its energies have had to be expended in reducing to order the pagan tribes of the Delta and Benué ;¹ but, having abolished the ancient savage rites of the heathens, it became its duty to put a check on the slave-raiding propensities of the Mohammedans, and the curtain has only recently fallen on the first act of the new drama.

Relations with the Emir of Nupé had become strained ; he and his predecessor, Maleké, had neglected to carry out the terms of their treaty, had checked trade, oppressed the pagan inhabitants of their kingdom, encouraged their Fulah subjects in slave-raiding, and had become insolent in their bearing towards both the officials of the Company and their suzerain of Gando. By the end of 1896 matters had arrived at such a pitch that, if the prestige of the Company was to be maintained, immediate action was necessary. It became a question whether the forces at the disposal of the Company were sufficient to attack a Mohammedan state bordering on a vast Mohammedan empire, with the risk of rousing the fanaticism of their co-religionists. Defeat to the Company would entail the undoing of the work of years, expulsion from two-thirds of its territory, and, in fact, absolute ruin ; success would bring with it an increase in power almost impossible to

¹ Administrative headquarters, Ibi.

estimate, relief to millions of oppressed people, and immense commercial advantages. Perhaps no better example than this can be put forward of the benefit to Great Britain of Chartered Company government; here was at stake a whole empire; the strongest of colonial governors would have refused under the circumstances to have embarked on such an undertaking without Imperial troops; but the Royal Niger Company decided to run the risk, and, to use a popular expression, "take the bull by the horns" or perish in the attempt. The result is worthy of being told at some length.

The expedition thus launched in January, 1897, was the largest and most important of any yet organized by the Company, and when the campaign commenced it was thought in England that there was something of rashness in attempting with a small body of Hausas to engage the vast hordes of fighting Fulahs capable of being put in the field by the Emir of Nupé. To overthrow the Fulahs of Nupé was the primary object of the expedition, though, after this had been accomplished, attention was turned to the neighbouring state of Ilorin. The force at the command of the Company consisted of about 550 Hausa Constabulary,¹ with thirty-two British officers and non-commissioned officers, two Whitworth guns, five seven-pounder mountain-guns, and six Maxims, while for the important duty of patrolling the river separating Northern from Southern Nupé about a dozen stern-wheel steamers and launches were available. To understand the operations it is necessary to bear in mind the situation of the Nupé kingdom as described in the last chapter, where it was explained that the Emir's capital lies in Northern Nupé, and

¹ About sixty per cent. pure Hausas; thirty per cent. Yorubas; ten per cent. other tribes. The total strength of the Company's Constabulary is about 1000, but the garrisons in the Benué and Lower Niger could not be withdrawn during the operations.

the country to the south of the Middle Niger was the great slaving-ground of the Fulahs. Lokoja (at the confluence) was selected as the starting-point, and it being known that the greater part of the Nupé army under the Makum was on the war-path near Kabba, about fifty miles due west of Lokoja, it was proposed to at once attack their camp and endeavour to cut off their retreat across the Niger; while to complete the success of this plan the Company's fleet¹ was despatched to watch the crossings above Egga. The little column² left Lokoja on the 6th January, and marched on Sura, a few miles north of Kabba, so as to intervene between the enemy and his base, and thus force him to fight. On the 11th Sura was reached and a permanent camp established; one company was despatched north to open up communications with Egga, as the column had moved from Lokoja *en air*; and four hundred men were formed into a flying column to attack the Makum's force. News now arrived that the war camp had been broken up and that the army was in full retreat towards the west; it being considered hopeless to attempt to overtake the enemy, the Hausas, after hoisting the British flag in Kabba and burning the adjacent war camp, returned to Sura on the 14th. From that place a movement was made on Egbon in a direct line to Bida, and, on reaching the river on the 22nd, it was learnt that the Fulah army was in a demoralized state and scattered in the villages west of Egbon.

In the meanwhile the Lokoja garrison had proceeded up the river with the fleet, so as to join the Kabba column in the attack on Bida, and hearing that the enemy had reached Ladi (the old southern capital), the officer in command immediately attacked the town, which was captured and destroyed

¹ Under the command of Mr. William Wallace.

² Sir George Goldie accompanied the expedition, the military command being given to Major Arnold, 3rd Hussars.

the day before the main column reached the river at Egbon. The excellent work done by Mr. Wallace¹ and his fleet while the Kabba force was in the interior had everything to say to the thorough success of the campaign. The river was divided into six sections for patrol work, and every part of it from Lokoja to Jebba was carefully watched; moreover, by preaching an anti-Fulah crusade amongst the oppressed waterside Ganaga tribes, Wallace secured their co-operation and the use of an unlimited supply of canoes. In this way Northern Nupé was entirely cut off from the country to the south of the river, and the Makum, with the remnant of his force, was prevented from retreating on Bida.

Although somewhat disappointed at not having succeeded in inducing the Commander-in-Chief to give battle, Sir George Goldie was more than satisfied with the turn of affairs, and being aware that the Emir had formed alliances with neighbouring Fulah States,² and meant to defend Bida at all costs, he at once decided to advance on the capital. The boldness of this stroke will be appreciated when it is known that the Fulah army mustered 30,000 fighting men, a third of whom were mounted, and a proportion of the infantry armed with modern rifles; while the British force numbered barely 600. With the latter, however, were two Whitworth³ and five 7-pounder guns,⁴ as well as six machine-guns,⁵ and the Hausas were thoroughly disciplined and commanded by British officers. The advance commenced without delay; a reconnoitring party crossed the river from Egbon on the 23rd January, followed by the main body on the following day. On the 25th the advanced guard drove in the enemy's

¹ For this Mr. Wallace was created a C.M.G.

² Lapai, Argai, and others.

³ A 9-pounder and a 12-pounder.

⁴ Rifled muzzle-loaders.

⁵ .45; the men were armed with Sniders (.577).

scouts, and camp was formed at Lokitsha. Thence to Bida was a distance of about fifteen miles, and soon after commencing the march on the 26th the head of the column came in touch with the enemy, who retired when fired on. No serious resistance was shown until the advanced guard reached a point within about five miles of the walls of the capital, when, on taking possession of a ridge evacuated by the enemy, they found themselves in sight of Bida and the whole Fulah army. Owing to the nature of the country, the column had been obliged to move with a very narrow front, its whole length (from advanced guard to rear guard) extending over a distance of seven miles; it was thus some considerable time before the troops could be formed up for attack. But the intention had not been to attack until the following day, it having been hoped to be able to drive back the enemy behind the walls of the town, and to encamp in a ravine at a distance of about three miles from them. This was eventually done, but not without trouble. While the column was filing into camp, the enemy's cavalry commenced to threaten the flanks and rear, and it was necessary to close up and advance in square; the Fulah cavalry now made repeated charges on all sides, but were utterly nonplussed by the galling fire from the Maxims, so that they gradually drew off to the town. Meanwhile the Whitworth guns were still in rear, one of the 7-pounders had been lost, and Lieutenant Thomson had been cut off by the enemy and killed. The withdrawal of the enemy's cavalry was followed by the advance of their infantry sharpshooters, who took up positions well under cover, and commenced to harass the little British force now established in camp. Without the Whitworth guns, whose safety was beginning to be a matter of serious consideration, it would have been almost useless attempting the capture of Bida; consequently, two companies were sent back to bring them up, which they were successful in doing, though not until

late in the evening. The 9-pounder arrived before sunset, and having been brought into action, did immense execution, its second shell landing in the midst of the allies' staff, and killing the principal war-chief, from which resulted the desertion in the night of the whole of the Lapai and Argai contingents. The 12-pounder reached camp after dark, and during the night a few shells and rockets were dropped into Bida.


At daybreak on the 27th the enemy's scouts were found to be advancing; camp was struck, and the whole force moved slowly forward in square formation. For some little distance nothing occurred, then, on reaching the crest of a low ridge, the Fulah cavalry commenced their tactics of the previous day; in a few moments the square was enveloped, and charge succeeded charge, though without once penetrating the square; maxim and rifle kept up an incessant fire, and the artillery played on the masses of the enemy forming up outside the walls of the town. The Emir himself was in command, and knowing full well what defeat would entail, meant resisting to the bitter end, but a well directed shell bursting within a few feet of him, scattered his staff, and a general retirement took place.¹ The Whitworth guns now bombarded the town, and two companies advanced to fire the buildings with rockets. This was too much for the warriors, who forthwith abandoned the town and took to the open plains beyond, where they suffered considerably at the hands of the artillery, until they had got beyond range. "Bida is ours," briefly telegraphed Sir George Goldie, after the British flag had been hoisted over the Emir's palace, and probably no more important message has ever been transmitted to England by the West Coast cable. The fall of Bida implied not only the conquest of the kingdom of Nupe, and the death-blow to slave-raiding

¹ The Emir was slightly wounded on this occasion.

in this part of Africa, but also the permanent establishment of British power in one of the most important states of the great Fulah Empire, an event which in a few weeks became known to every Mohammedan from Timbuctoo to Lake Chad.

It was a matter of doubt for a few days whether the Makum and his men would not retreat to Ilorin and seek the assistance of the Fulahs of that State to recover Nupé; the fortunate capture of his younger brother, however, enabled negotiations to be opened with the Makum, who, having given in his submission, was forthwith proclaimed Emir of Northern Nupé, but a vassal of the Royal Niger Company. Southern Nupé was at the same time declared to be a free country, under the protection of the Company, within which the legal *status* of slavery was for ever abolished.

This brilliant and decisive campaign had occupied a month, but there was still work to be done by the gallant little force. Sir George Goldie desired to visit the Emir of Ilorin, on a friendly mission, to settle certain matters connected with the Lagos boundary, and, having fears for the good faith of the Ilorin war party, he considered it advisable to take with him an armed escort, consisting of 300 men, two 7-pounders, and four Maxims. The expedition assembled at Jebba on the 8th February, and two days later, letters having in the meantime been sent to Emir Suliman informing him of the friendly nature of the Governor's visit, marched south. On the 12th the Orere river was crossed, and on the 14th the Areba river; so far there had been no sign of opposition. That evening it was accidentally discovered that the Baloguns, or war-chiefs, intended to offer resistance to the advance, and, when the column started next morning, every precaution was taken against surprise. By 8.30 a.m. it became evident that the Ilorin army was on the move, and shortly afterwards, when the Oyo river was being approached, the threatening attitude of the enemy's cavalry necessitated the rapid for-



mation of the Hausas into a fighting square. This had hardly been effected than bodies of horsemen charged simultaneously on all sides; the Maxims and Sniders were kept hard at work, and in a very few minutes the deadly hail had driven the survivors of the charges to a safe distance. The square then advanced across the Oyo and encamped for the night within a few miles of the city. It was fully expected that the enemy would attack under cover of darkness, but, although their piquet-fires disclosed the fact that they were in positions almost surrounding the camp, nothing occurred to disturb the rest of the troops. At dawn on the 16th, the little force paraded, and advanced in square formation towards the Asa River (flowing under the walls of the city), where 8000 or 10,000 of the enemy were seen waiting to dispute the passage. The guns and Maxims having been brought into action, the square reached the river-bank without halting, and the Fulah force broke up and retired within the city. Nothing now remained but to shell the place, and by 4 p.m. the effect of the artillery fire had been successful in clearing the town, when it was occupied without further opposition. Compared with the two days' fighting at Bida, the resistance offered by the Ilorins was insignificant, which may be partly accounted for by knowing that a division of the army had only a few days previously been thoroughly beaten by the Lagos Constabulary on the southern borders of the kingdom,¹ and that the Emir (who desired peace) did not support his Baloguns in opposing the advance of the Company's force. The results of this expedition were as complete and satisfactory as could have been desired; Emir Suliman was reinstated, on signing a treaty by which he placed himself "entirely under the protection and power of the Company"; slave-raiding and the introduction of gin and rum into the country were forbidden; and all slaves who

¹ *Ide* page 110.

desired freedom were released. Thus in fifty-one days¹ the Company had completely subjugated two important Moham-
medan kingdoms, introduced a new system of administration,
delivered from oppression and tyranny the vast pagan popu-
lation, and, by a formal proclamation, abolished for ever the
status of slavery in the regions south of Lokoja. "There
can be now no question," said the *Times*, in describing the
events of the campaign, "that military resistance in that
portion of the Company's territories which lies to the south
and west of the river Niger is at an end. The reign of terror
maintained by the slave-raiding powers since we have had
any acquaintance with the country is over, and a vast district
has thus been thrown open to the operations of peaceful trade.
It is perhaps too soon to attempt to estimate fully the far-
reaching effects of this campaign. They can only be realized
by degrees. The wise moderation with which victory has
been used offers the best guarantee of the durability of its
results. The issue was one in which the existence of the
Company and the maintenance of Imperial authority over a
great region in the most populous portion of West Africa
were at stake. Had the operations been less carefully
planned, and less gallantly executed, the nation which takes
success with habitual indifference might have had to choose
between the alternative of a big West African war or the
partition by France and Germany of a very valuable British
sphere of influence. Sir George Goldie, by whose efforts the
territory was in the first instance secured for this country,
has shown himself able to keep it not only by diplomacy but
also in the field. Its development will henceforth become a
recognized object of national interest."

Turning now to the commercial operations of the Company,

¹ The total casualties of the campaign were one officer and seven men killed, one officer and twelve men wounded. The cost of the campaign was £25,000.



A LAUNCH OF THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY.

(To face page 273.)

we find that its career has been no less remarkable as trader than as sovereign, and a steady dividend averaging $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum has been paid to the shareholders.¹ We traced the development of Niger trade from its commencement down to the disappearance of French competition, and the subsequent establishment of the Royal Niger Company as the sole representative of European traders in this part of Africa. It now remains to give a brief account of the Company's method of conducting business in the Niger, of the products and prospects of its territories, and of the advantages that have accrued to Great Britain by the successful completion of the work begun by Macgregor Laird. Trade with the natives is carried on at a series of factories or trading-stations erected on the banks of the river, the more important ones in charge of Europeans, and the smaller ones presided over by coloured agents, principally from Sierra Leone. Of these factories there are about forty, grouped into districts and so situated as to command the trade of the surrounding tribes, the main depôt being at Akassa, a few miles within the Nun mouth, and accessible to ocean-going steamers. Stern-wheel steamers and launches ply between this point and the various factories, conveying up European goods and bringing down the native produce. This goes on all the year round, though the heaviest part of the work is necessarily carried on in the rainy season, when the rivers are everywhere navigable; for, some of the tributaries of the Lower Niger and the whole of the Benué can only, for six or eight months of the year, be navigated by launches of the lightest draught.

There is little difference in appearance between one trading-station and another, the number of corrugated-iron store sheds alone denoting the importance of the place, since, as a rule, the native town, or collection of villages, cannot be seen from the river. The agent requires to be something more

¹ 1892, $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

than a shop-keeper, as all sales and purchases are transacted on the barter system, which, however, is much simplified by using a "head" of cowries (value fixed at 1s. 3d.) as the base. The price to be paid for native produce is fixed for the district from time to time; thus, supposing that a native brings in five shillings' worth of palm-oil, the agent allows him to select Manchester goods, salt, or whatever he wants, to the value of four "heads" of cowries, the value of all the articles on sale in the store of course being fixed in English money. To the uninitiated it is a roundabout way of doing business, but there being no money currency¹ in the country, there is no more convenient method of trading, and in some respects it has its advantages. But the intricacies of business do not end here, since the native is most capricious in his tastes, and whereas at one time his heart will be set on a particular pattern cloth, at others he will take nothing but salt, or perhaps cowries, so that it is by no means an easy matter for the agent to know with what article to stock his store. The local market rate of cowries also requires as careful daily attention as the rate of silver on the Bombay Stock Exchange. All this is very different to the original manner of trading in the Niger, when a steamer loaded with English goods went up the river, and stayed there until everything had been exchanged with the natives; in those days a native laid his produce on the deck, and the English trader put down by its side a piece of cloth worth perhaps a hundredth part of its value, and then, if the native appeared discontented, added a clasp-knife or a string of beads or two until the bargain was concluded.

Year by year, new factories have been opened, and new products brought to light, though, even now, two-thirds of the great store of wealth of these regions remain locked up.

¹ This subject will be found discussed at greater length in Chapter XIX.

Trade has so far, by force of circumstances, been confined to the neighbourhood of the waterway, but as time goes on we shall doubtless find the Company's factories established inland, and taking the place of the travelling Hausa merchants. The chief exports from the Niger are, like those of the rest of West Africa, palm-oil and rubber, though there is here a much greater variety of other products,¹ amongst which may be mentioned ivory, shea butter, *adansonia* fibre, potash, hides, tin, gum, and various oil seeds. The palm-oil comes almost entirely from the districts of the Lower Niger, shea butter from the Middle Niger, while the Benué produces such things as ivory, gum, and rubber. In exchange for these articles are given all sorts and kinds of European commodities: Manchester goods, Birmingham wares, tobacco, salt, and an infinity of odds and ends, while in the Delta regions spirits, gunpowder and "Long Dane" and other "trade" muskets are still admitted. With regard to the sale of these latter articles, some explanation is necessary; for, the mere mention of such demoralizing things will at once attract the attention of the philanthropic Englishman. The extent to which the whole of the West Coast of Africa has been flooded with spirits ever since trade was established with that part of the world is well known to everyone, and it is only within the last few years that any attempt has been made to put a check on the enormous imports of this deleterious commodity. As in the case of the slave trade, England took the first step in the matter, and endeavoured, at the Berlin Conference in 1884, to impress on the Powers the importance of putting some restraint on the spirit traffic. It is noteworthy that Sir George Goldie, who represented the Niger Company at the Conference, was the prime mover in this liquor question, though nothing came of his suggestions until the Brussels

¹ *Vide* Chapter XXII.

Conference in 1890. Meanwhile, however, the Company decided to take independent action, and, with its Charter at its back, put a heavy duty¹ on the import of spirits into its territories; following this up, it next prohibited the introduction of spirits into the countries north of the Confluence, thus confining the traffic to the pagans of the Lower Niger; again it reduced the area, and admitted spirits only as far north as the seventh parallel, the almost prohibitive duty in the Delta acting as a most effective check on the consumption.² This action has given rise to considerable disaffection among the Delta tribes, who looked on cheap drink as one of the benefits to be derived from European traders, but, regardless of all this, the Company only awaits the opportunity to place a total prohibition on the introduction of gin and rum into its dominions. Why this is at present impossible we will show when reviewing the several West African problems remaining to be solved by the Great Powers. The gunpowder and arms mentioned above as imports are of the most harmless description; the gunpowder is that known as "trade powder," with propulsive powers hardly sufficient to discharge a bullet from a musket, and the arms consist of nothing more deadly than old-fashioned flint-locks and percussion guns—more dangerous, in all probability, to the firer than to anyone else. Yet the sale of even these articles is discouraged as much as possible by a heavy import duty,³ while the introduction into the territories of arms of precision or war *matériel* of any kind is, in accordance with the Brussels Act, absolutely prohibited.

With regard to statistics, since none are published, we can give the reader but little information, and it is consequently impossible to compare the value of Nigeria with that of any

¹ 2s. per Imperial gallon.

² In two years the import of spirits was reduced by one-half.

³ 100 *per cent. ad valorem*.

of our other West African possessions, but from details occasionally disclosed by officials, we learn sufficient to form an opinion that this is by no means an unremunerative part of Africa. The dividend on the capital we know to be upwards of six per cent., with a not inconsiderable balance to carry forward to the reserve fund, all derived from the trade profits,¹ for, as previously stated, the revenue from taxation goes to defray the cost of administration.

About the future prosperity of the country there can be no two opinions; time and patience are all that are required to develop for Great Britain markets such as she can never hope to have in any other part of Tropical Africa. Until now, only the outskirts have been touched by the trader; the enormous wealth of Hausaland—a tract of country whose soil we have shown to be remarkable for its fertility, and whose teeming population is proverbial for its intelligence and industry—remains to be opened up. The prospect is, indeed, a brilliant one, and if Englishmen are slow to appreciate it, our neighbours across the Channel know full well what is ahead, otherwise their eagerness to dispute the possession of every square mile of this portion of the great continent would not be so apparent. Whether the Chartered Company, whose energy has brought Great Britain to the threshold of this land of wealth, will be permitted to continue its work of administration, or whether the time has come for a change, and what form that change should take, are questions which need not be entered into by us. They are even now under the careful consideration of Her Majesty's Government, and whatever may be the conclusion arrived at, we may be certain that the achievements of the Royal Niger Company will be handed

¹ The net profits for the year 1896, after writing off £18,010 for depreciation, and placing £1665 to general reserve account, including fire and marine insurance, amounted to £36,048.

down to posterity as deeds worthy of being recorded in the history of Greater Britain.¹

¹ Lord Salisbury, speaking in the House of Lords (May, 1897), said, "It is impossible to mention the names of the founders of the Company—the late Lord Aberdare, and especially Sir George Goldie—without recognizing the very high administrative ability they have shown, and the great enterprise and resource which place them high on the list of the pioneers of English civilization in the dark places of the earth."





CHAPTER XVI.

THE NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE.

"THE raw material is worked into shape by the Foreign Office until the time arrives when the finer processes of the Colonial Office are applicable." These words of a well-known statesman explain fully the method adopted, as considered most suitable, for the gradual expansion of our Empire. In travelling down the Coast to this our uttermost possession, we have seen the "finer processes" in working order in four Crown Colonies; we have also seen the Foreign Office, as guardian of a Chartered Company, preparing the way for the Colonial Office; and now, again, do we find the Foreign Office the guiding star, though at work this time in a different form—Consular Jurisdiction. British West Africa, therefore, furnishes us with examples of three distinct ways of governing our possessions, and in this respect alone is of considerable interest.

The Niger Coast Protectorate under its present administration has been in existence but a few years, and, as a British possession, dates only from 1884, when, as will be remembered, it was included in the British Protectorate of the Niger. Prior to that, the various rivers, known as the Oil Rivers, had been for many years virtually in the hands of English trading firms, and earlier still were the resort of slaving vessels and palm-oil merchants—more generally known in those days as "Palm-oil Ruffians." The tract of country included in this Protectorate consists of such scraps of land

as, for one reason or another, it was considered undesirable to attach to the Colony of Lagos or to the territories of the Royal Niger Company, and comprises a coast-line of upwards of 250 miles. The extent of its limits inland are at present undefined,¹ though its northern neighbours are in all cases one or the other of the two last-mentioned administrations, and the territories of the Niger Company are so situated as to divide the Coast Protectorate into two parts. Of these the western part lies between the Lagos boundary and the Forcados River, the eastern part being wedged in between the Brass mouth of the Niger and the German Colony of the Cameroons. It is a land of swamps, creeks, backwaters, and rivers,² and is remarkable for its water communications, it being possible to pass by means of the network of creeks and streams from one extremity of the Protectorate to the other. This is, of course, a great advantage for trade and administrative purposes, though the immense area of water and the low-lying nature of the land add considerably to the unhealthiness of the climate. Yet here, as elsewhere in West Africa, attempts are often made to prove that the Niger Coast possesses anything but a baneful climate, and instances are given of Englishmen who have spent forty years off and on in the Oil Rivers.³

¹ A temporary boundary line between the Niger Coast Protectorate and the Royal Niger Company has been fixed as follows: On the west, the Forcados River as far as Warri Town; on the east, a line running north from a point on the coast half-way between the Nun and the Brass up to the town of Idu.

² The principal rivers from west to east are the Benue, Escravos, Warri (Forcados), Brass, St. Nicholas, St. Barbara, St. Bartholomew, Sombrero, New Calabar, Bonny, Andoni (St. Antonio), Opobo, Kwo Ibo, Akpayafe, Kwa, and Cross, the last four of which empty themselves into the Old Calabar before reaching the sea.

³ The only published health returns are those for 1895 and 1896, in each of which years nearly a quarter of the European population (215) either died or were invalided from the country.

Though only recently added to the British Empire, this part of West Africa has been in continuous intercourse with Europe for several centuries;¹ as many of the names testify, the Portuguese was for a long while the chief power—at any rate as far as trade was concerned; ships of all nations frequented the rivers when the over-sea slave-trade was in full force; and, later, when palm-oil took the place of the traffic in human beings, the British trader remained in almost undisputed possession—whether for good or for evil we will not pretend to say. The country has no old history worthy of being written down, for the only material changes are those which have been brought about, during the present century, by the presence of British traders and officials. Had Barbot, the first writer on these parts, lived two centuries longer, he would have found ten miles from the sea little or no alteration in New Calabar or its people. So is it with all these rivers; except for the few, civilization has remained at stagnation point; the merchant, the missionary, and the consul, have lived among the people for half a century or more; the better class of native has been educated in England, yet the mass of the population is still as barbarous, vile, and low in type as any form of human creature. The fact is that, until 1891, the country never had a chance, and, as a proof of the difficulty of civilizing the people, even with the best available methods, we may mention an incident which occurred at Brass in 1895. Here men, who were supposed to be thoroughly enlightened in every way, educated in England, and professed Christians, were suddenly seized with frenzy, and instinctively returned to the most barbarous of their ancient fetish customs—

¹ *An Account of the Kingdom of Benin; Abstract of a Voyage to New Kalabar, Bandi, and Doni Rivers, in 1699*, by J. Barbot and J. Brazilhier. Astley's Collection, vol. iii. 1745. Also *Barbot's Travels, &c.*, in Churchill's Collection, vol. v.

amongst other atrocities, publicly eating the flesh of the captives taken in the fight at Akassa. Thus in one day the missionary saw the toil of half a century undone.

Until 1882 Great Britain had no Consul resident in the Oil Rivers, the British Consul who looked after this part of the coast living on the Spanish Island of Fernando Po, of which, for many years, he was also Spanish Governor.¹ Among the earlier of these officials may be mentioned Captain John Beecroft (already referred to), Hutchinson, Richard Burton (the famous traveller), Charles Livingstone (brother of the explorer), Hopkins and Hartley. While with the establishment of the Consulate at Old Calabar, we find associated such names as Hewett, H. H. Johnston, and Aynsley. When the Consul resided at Fernando Po, his visits to the Oil Rivers were only occasional, since he had to depend for conveyance entirely on the chance arrival of a British gun-boat at Fernando Po. Consequently the rivers were left very much to themselves, though, as the P. O. R. began to be superseded by the better class of English trader, who became more or less a resident in the country, it was soon evident that some form of local administration was a necessity. The traders therefore established in most of the rivers what was termed a Court of Equity, whose members conferred occasionally with H.M.'s Consul; but the court had no real jurisdiction, and the most it could do was to regulate, in a measure, affairs connected with trade. This it appears to have done with a certain amount of success, and it gained sufficient influence over the chiefs (principally by holding out the threat of sending for the Consul and a gun-boat) to induce them to expend their "comey" in opening up

¹ His official title was Consul for the Bight of Biafra and the Island of Fernando Po. Burton calls the latter the "Foreign Office Grave."

trade routes. "Comey" (the native rendering of custom duty) was the duty levied by the chief on imports, and, in the days of sailing vessels, consisted, as a rule, of European goods to the value of a puncheon of palm-oil for each mast in a ship; while "bar comey" was the export duty—a small sum on each puncheon of oil shipped by the trader.

The existence of the Court of Equity was of short duration, but with the removal of the British Consulate to Old Calabar, the power of the Consul increased. By the Order in Council appointing the Consuls, they were given full power and authority to carry into effect, and enforce by fine or imprisonment, the observance of any treaty between Great Britain and the native chiefs; to make rules and regulations for the peace, order, and good government of Her Majesty's subjects in the territory; and to remove an individual who should prove refractory after being twice sentenced. A small gun-boat¹ was also placed permanently at the disposal of the Consul, who, now backed up by a show of force, was enabled to establish something like authority. Many of the native chiefs saw the advantages of making treaties with Great Britain, and much was done in this respect by Consuls Hopkins and Hewett; still, at its best, the consular authority was wholly inadequate for such a wide tract of territory. Difficulties were always arising; the chiefs quarrelled amongst themselves, stopped trade, were punished by being bombarded by a gun-boat, and the whole state of affairs was unsatisfactory. This continued for some years after Great Britain had proclaimed a Protectorate over the Oil Rivers, but in 1889 the Government decided that the time had arrived for some better form of administration, and despatched a Special Commissioner (Major Claude MacDonald)

¹ H.M.S. *Alecto*, paddle-steamer.

to interview the chiefs of the various rivers and discover their opinions on the subject. The chiefs, one and all, expressed a desire for direct Imperial administration, and agreed to surrender their "comey" rights in favour of the Government, so that the revenue thus collected might defray the cost of administration. The organization of the new administration was entrusted to Major MacDonald, and on the 1st August, 1891, the Oil Rivers commenced a new era under the title of the Oil Rivers Protectorate.¹

Major MacDonald was appointed Commissioner and Consul-General, with headquarters at Old Calabar; while in each of the five other principal rivers (viz. Opobo, Bonny, Brass, Forcados, and Benin) were established a Vice-Consul and



A CHIEF'S STAFF OF OFFICE.

Deputy Commissioner, a Consular Agent, and a judicial officer in charge of the Consular Court, with European and native clerks.² No detail which could affect the success of the administration of the Protectorate was forgotten, and prior to its inauguration every minor department had been

¹ Changed to its present title 13th May, 1893.

² In 1896 the system of the division of the Protectorate for administrative purposes was re-organized. The Protectorate was divided into three divisions: the eastern, central, and western; each under a divisional consular officer. The eastern division is synonymous with the Old Calabar districts; the central division comprises the districts between the Opobo and Brass Rivers; and the western district includes Warri and Benin.

worked out. As an instance of organization, perhaps nothing more complete has ever been undertaken in so short a time; everything was carefully planned in England; on the appointed day the Consul-General and his staff of officials left Liverpool for the Oil Rivers, each knowing exactly where he was going and what he had to do. Thus this little band of "Pilgrim Fathers," as they called themselves, fell into their places at once; the Vice-Consuls and Consular Agents were dropped at their various rivers, and the Departmental Officers commenced to organize their several departments—Customs, Post Office,¹ Military, Marine, Treasury, and Botanical.² The Customs Department was of immense importance, since on it depended the revenue which was to pay for the whole administration, and, without at present entering into details, we will only say that the duties collected have come up to the most sanguine expectations, and that the Protectorate from the outset has been self-supporting. For the purpose of keeping order among the wild native tribes, a Constabulary force was organized—recruited from the Yoruba country,³ and several armed river steamers and launches were put into commission. The difficulties of the various officials in commencing their duties were great; there was little to go on, but, in the course of time, the natives began to grasp the situation, and to understand that the new

¹ The following extract from the Annual Report for 1895-6 is curious: "Postal Revenue: decrease of £1614. Due mainly to the requirements of stamp collectors (who had bought largely of the new issue in 1894-5) being satisfied."

² A London office was established, under an Agent-General, where all arrangements were made for the purchase of supplies and plant, the appointment of officials, &c. In 1896 this was abolished, and the work taken over by the Crown Agents for the Colonies.

³ Strength of the force in 1897: 450 men, armed with Martini-Henry carbines, four 7-pounder guns, two Maxims, and two Nordenfeldts. Each man carries a month's provisions and 100 rounds of ammunition.

Vice-Consul of the district had powers somewhat similar to those of the old Consul, except that he was always present, and so there was no question of being able to take advantage of his absence to commit lawless acts on British subjects. The natives themselves were not technically British subjects, and order amongst themselves was maintained by their chiefs, though practically the latter were given to understand from the beginning that British power was paramount, and that the Consular Court was available to anyone who chose to make use of it.

In this manner complete control was established in the neighbourhood of the various trading-stations, and the Vice-Consuls, in their capacity as political officers, gradually extended their influence among the surrounding tribes; new roads and markets were opened up; tribal warfare was suppressed, and steps were taken to put a stop to such barbarous customs as prevailed among the people. The eradication of all these inhuman practices is, however, a matter of time, and, though much has been done, a great deal still remains to be done before the natives can be persuaded to abandon the long-cherished beliefs of their ancient religion.

To describe the Protectorate it will be simplest to take each district separately, and as, so far, we have dealt with the British possessions in the order in which they come from west to east, we will neglect, for the time being, the seat of government of the Niger Coast, and commence with the westernmost district, viz. Benin. The river which gives its name to the district flows down in a tortuous course from the north-east, and enters the sea at a point, 5° 3' E., and 5° 46' N., in the Bight of Benin—famous by reason of the old couplet so often quoted:—

“ Beware and take care of the Bight of Benin,
Whence few come out, though many go in.”

The mouth of the river, owing to the somewhat shallow water on the bar, is only navigable by vessels drawing less than twelve feet of water ; consequently, ocean-going steamers proceed to the Forcados River, passing thence by the creeks to the Benin. Seven or eight miles from the mouth and on the right bank of the river is a creek¹ by which canoes can pass to Lagos town (a distance of 170 miles); two or three miles higher up, and on the same bank, is the Brohemie Creek, leading to Nana's Town, while ten miles further on are two other important creeks, whose entrances lie almost opposite one another, that on the right bank coming down from Gwato, the port of Benin, that on the left bank connecting with the Forcados River. Above this the river is still of some size, but at a distance of about fifty miles from its mouth, close to Sapele,² it bifurcates, the two arms being known respectively as the Jamieson and the Ethiopie.³ The boundaries of the district through which this river and its tributaries flow, are on the west the Colony of Lagos, and on the east the Escravos or Escardos River, which separates the Benin district from the Warri district.

When the Protectorate was first established, there were two principal chiefs through whose hands the whole trade of the Benin country passed—the King of Benin, and his vassal Nana, both of whom have since had to be suppressed and removed. With the latter, accounts were settled in 1894; but the story of the Benin massacre and its results is of more recent date, and not likely to be forgotten for some years to come. First, then, as to Nana: he was a Jakri and

¹ First navigated by a European, in 1891, when Captain Gallway and Mr. Haly Hutton made the journey in five days. Vide *Geographical Journal*, vol. i., page 122.

² A good road from Sapele to Benin City (about twenty-five miles) was commenced in 1897.

³ Called after Mr. Jamieson and his steamer the *Ethiopie*; vide page 154.

the most powerful chief anywhere near the coast, monopolizing the trade of the river, and virtually ruling the whole country to the south of Benin City. His principal town was Brohemie (or Nana's Town as he preferred to call it), which was a pattern of what a native town should be—well laid out, with wide streets, and kept scrupulously clean,¹ while his own house and those of his chiefs were built on European models. Nana himself was well-educated, of great ability and industry, and more or less enlightened. His sole idea was to make money, and for many years he had been a middle-man of the palm-oil trade carried on between the natives and the European traders, as were and still are all the other principal chiefs along the coast. Nana's trading "boys" were sent far afield in search of produce, and, presuming on the acknowledged power of their chief, did pretty much as they pleased, as often as not seizing produce without paying for it. Whether Nana himself encouraged this *zabberdasti* (to use an Indian term), or whether he had not sufficient authority over his people to check it, is doubtful; but in 1894, in spite of the frequent remonstrances of the Vice-Consul, matters had arrived at such a pass that it was decided to depose Nana and break up his clan. Egged on by his war chiefs, Nana now openly defied British authority and threatened to stop all trade. On the 19th August, H.M.S. *Phurbe*, then at St. Paul de Loanda, was telegraphed for, and, being joined by H.M.S. *Alecto* and a detachment of the Protectorate Constabulary, commenced operations on the 26th August.² Nana's Town was situated in the midst of a dense mangrove swamp, the only means of

¹ Immense labour must have been expended in constructing the town. The site was an artificial one, made among the swamps, of white sand brought from a distance of many miles; while the houses were built of clay, also conveyed to the spot from a distance.

² Vide *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*. Vol. xxxix., page 191.

communication between it and the Benin River being the Brohemie Creek, which, however, was known to be protected by batteries along its banks. It was therefore determined to cut a path through the bush and take the batteries in flank, a feat successfully accomplished, though not without immense labour; and, having carried the first battery, the force commenced to advance on the town itself. Fresh paths were cut through the bush, but, owing to the innumerable creeks and the heavy fire from the guns of the town, it was found quite impossible to make rapid progress, and eventually the enemy's fire became so galling that the force was obliged to retire. It was evident that without reinforcements the town could not be taken, accordingly, during the nineteen days that it took to procure these from the Cape, the *Phæbe* and *Alecto* were occupied in blockading the creeks and bombarding the town from the Benin River. By the 20th September the *Philomel* and the *Widgeon* had arrived, and the bombardment became brisk. On the 23rd the advance commenced through the bush, a path being cut in a somewhat wider circuit than previously, and though Nana kept up a steady fire with his artillery and machine guns, little damage had been done when the party returned to the boats in the evening. On the following day the final attack was made, one hundred Constabulary men and one hundred and thirty-six bluejackets proceeding by land, while the remainder of the force advanced up the creek in the ships' boats. The result was a complete success, and the enemy, finding their guns taken in front and flank, made but a feeble resistance before taking to flight. The town was in the possession of the British force by 8 a.m., and during the next two days it was destroyed. An attempt was then made to capture Nana, but although his canoe, with all his personal belongings and £324 in English money, was captured, he himself managed to escape overland to Lagos, where he surrendered on the 26th October, being afterwards

tried at Old Calabar and sentenced to be deported to the Gold Coast. By the removal of this turbulent spirit immense benefits accrued to the trade of the district, the merchants being enabled to deal direct with the producers, who, in their turn, gained the advantage of receiving a fairer price for their palm-oil.

Nana, in spite of his short-comings, had generally proved friendly to Europeans, and had certainly been a keen trader; but with regard to Benin proper, whose capital lies considerably to the north and at a distance from the river, matters were different, the kings of Benin for many years past having discouraged intercourse with Europeans. The first Englishman to visit Benin City was a Captain Windham,¹ who conducted a trading expedition from England in 1553, with the result that he himself and most of the crews of his vessels died from one cause or another. Windham was followed, thirty-five years later, by James Welsh, who, within the next five years, made two voyages to Benin, and brought home a remunerative cargo of ivory, palm-oil, and pepper. From this time Benin City² was frequently visited by Portuguese and Dutch merchants, and occasionally by travellers of other nations,³ and from all accounts, a century or more ago, was still the capital of a very powerful kingdom, being laid out with wide streets, and possessing even handsome buildings. During the present century its decay has been rapid, and forty years ago, when Burton visited the place from Fernando Po, the country was already on the decline. Trade with Europeans had never been regularly established, for the principal reason that few legitimate merchants cared to risk

¹ *Vide* page 51.

² Jakri name U'bini. The Benin people themselves call it Ado.

³ Giovanni Belzoni, the Egyptian traveller, in an endeavour to reach Timbuctoo, died at Gwato (Benin territory), of dysentery, 3rd December, 1823.

dealing with a monarch who perpetrated the vilest crimes, and who was quite capable of ordering the crucifixion of anyone with whom he happened to be displeased. The slave-traders, not being so squeamish, and for the most part as unprincipled as any king of Benin, cared little how they obtained their cargoes so long as they filled their ships, and therefore made the Benin River a regular port of call. The abolition of the slave trade completed the ruin of Benin, as the king, incensed at the loss of his revenue, did all in his power to prevent all dealings with Europeans, a condition of things which continued until about ten years ago, when several British merchants established factories on the banks of the Benin River, and for a time succeeded in carrying on indirectly a fair amount of business with Benin City. The support afforded by the presence of a permanent vice-consul, in 1891, gave them sufficient encouragement to open factories higher up the river—at Gwato and Sapele, and later on, when the hulk *Hindoostan* was towed up to the latter place, and converted into the vice-consulate (1893), the traders came in touch with the producers themselves. These were mostly Sobos, dwelling considerably to the east of Benin City, for the Binis were restrained from trading, by reason of the fetish embargo placed on their movements by the king, who was regarded as the greatest juju-man of West Africa. They were forbidden by juju either to leave their country or to cross water, and so it was hopeless for them to attempt trade, except through Jakri or other middle-men.

One of the first duties of the new vice-consul of the district was to open up relations with the king, and for this purpose, in 1892, Captain Gallway visited Benin City, and succeeded in concluding a treaty with his Majesty, by which it was hoped that the trade of the country would be greatly developed. As time passed, however, it became evident that, in face of the treaty, the king had no intention of becoming less bar-

barous in his customs, or more friendly in his attitude towards white men, than had been his predecessors. Neither did the overthrow of Nana appear to impress him, for he was so convinced of his own power as a juju-man that he snapped his fingers at all interference. He continued to keep the trade of the country closed, and placed every obstacle in the way of his people visiting the British factories, and of the British merchants visiting his city.

It was to remove these difficulties and to induce the king to carry out the terms of the treaty which he had made with Great Britain that the Mission started for Benin City on the 1st January, 1897. It consisted of the Acting-Consul-General, Mr. Phillips, eight other Europeans,¹ and some 250 native carriers, besides superior natives, such as interpreters and clerks. On the 2nd January the party reached Gwato² in launches, and on the following morning commenced the eventful march to Benin City. Previous to this, messengers had been sent to the king, conveying presents, and acquainting him of the Consul-General's proposed visit; the reply brought back was friendly, but the king requested that the white men would postpone their visit for two months—until the annual festival, or what he called "making his father," was over. The Consul-General then sent to say that he could not wait, but would come at once. The king replied that he would receive the Mission. What happened is soon related. The path admitted only of movement in single file, and the line of carriers, almost a mile in length, was preceded by the principal European officers. The distance to the city was estimated at twenty-eight miles,

¹ Major Copland Crawford, Vice-Consul of the Benin and Warri District; Mr. Locke, District Commissioner of Warri; Captain Maling, 16th Lancers; Mr. Kenneth Campbell; Captain Boisragon; Dr. Elliot; and Messrs. Powis and Gordon.

² Gwato was the only port from which Europeans were allowed to approach the city, all other places having been declared fetish by the king.

and it was proposed to push on to a village on its outskirts that day, and visit the king the next morning. Half the march was completed without the slightest suspicion of intended treachery, when suddenly a shot was fired in front, followed immediately by a deadly fusilade from the dense bush all along the line. So utterly unexpected was the attack, and so excellently had the ambushade been arranged, that within a few minutes nearly every member of the party had been shot down. Of the native carriers only a few escaped, while, with the exception of Captain Boisragon and Mr. Locke, all the Europeans were massacred. The two Englishmen, after seeing their companions killed, took to the bush, in which they wandered for five days, enduring every species of hardship, and suffering much from several wounds, but eventually arriving in safety at the Gwato Creek.¹ The action of the Consul-General in taking an unarmed mission into Benin territory against the wish of the king has been severely criticized; whether he acted unwisely or not we will not now discuss, it is sufficient to know the unfortunate result.

The punitive expedition which followed is more pleasant reading.² No sooner had the news of the massacre reached England than the Cape Squadron was ordered up to undertake the duty of punishing the king and his people for their treacherous conduct, and so well was everything managed that within six weeks of the fate of the Mission being known—before the king had even finished “making his father”—a British force had destroyed Benin City and the chief towns of the country, and had returned to the coast. Neither was it, as in the case of the last Ashanti campaign, a “walk-over,” for the Binis resisted stoutly at several points, and the bush-

¹ A thrilling account of their adventures is given in *The Benin Massacre*, by Captain Alan Boisragon, one of the two survivors, 1898.

² *Benin, the City of Blood*, by Commander R. H. Bacon, R.N., 1897.

fighting was most trying work, though in the end the natives found it quite impossible to withstand shells, rockets, and Maxim guns. Benin City itself was occupied on the 18th February, and the state in which the place was found passes all description; in every direction were to be seen crucified corpses, headless trunks, huge pits filled with bodies in various stages of decomposition, and altars dripping with fresh human blood. "The one lasting remembrance of Benin in my mind," says Commander Bacon, "is its smells. Crucifixions, human sacrifices, and every other horror the eye could get accustomed to, to a large extent, but the smells no white man's internal economy could stand. Four times in one day I was practically sick from them, and many more times on the point of being so. Every person who was able, I should say, indulged in a human sacrifice, and those who could not, sacrificed some animal and left the remains in front of his house. After a day or so the whole town seemed one huge pest-house." We spare the reader further descriptions of the loathsome spot, to which, not inappropriately, has been applied the name of the "City of Blood." Simultaneously with the advance on Benin City, two other columns had been engaged in the capture of Gwato and Sapobar, in both of which operations there was considerable trouble with the natives, though they were soon reduced to reason.¹ Only one thing was wanting to complete the success of the expedition; the king and his war-chiefs fled on the approach of the British force, and though every effort was made to effect their capture, it was several months before they eventually gave themselves up.² That they got their deserts we need hardly say.

The only other district in the western division of the

¹ The total British casualties in the three columns were:—killed, two officers and five men; wounded, five officers and twenty-seven men. The survivors suffered severely from fever afterwards.

² August 5th, 1897.



A QUEEN OF THE OIL RIVERS.)

To face page 207.

Protectorate is Warri,¹ which lies between the Benin district and the territories of the Royal Niger Company, the Forcados River forming the boundary between the two administrations. This river is one of the most important mouths of the Niger, and for a distance of some ten miles from the sea is three or four miles in width, while its bar is practicable for the largest ocean-going vessels, there being as much as nineteen feet of water at high tide. Lagos, which, as we have seen, is most unfortunate in its approach from the sea, utilizes the Forcados for the transshipment of cargo from the large steamers into vessels of light draught; and this mouth has many advantages over the Nun² for the transport of merchandise, *matériel*, &c., to the upper part of the Lower Niger. Thus the new Imperial flotilla to be stationed at Lokoja has established a coaling-station at the mouth of the Forcados, which waterway will doubtless be much used in the future for conveying troops and stores to the Confluence.

The Vice-Consulate of the district is situated close to the native town of Warri, some forty miles from the Forcados mouth, and is surrounded by several old-established European trading-houses, whose business in palm-oil is done chiefly with the Sobo people, Jakris³ in some instances acting as middle-men. The little settlement, lining the banks of the creek, presents a picturesque appearance, though, situated as it is in a typical mangrove swamp, must be decidedly unhealthy. Much has of recent years been done to improve the place; the bush has been cleared and converted into coffee plantations, and several new and handsome buildings have been erected for the officials, whose energies have resulted in

¹ Other names, Iwere, Owere, Owihere, Awerre, Warre, Quarre. Barbot calls it Dowerre, Awerri, Ouwerri, Oveiro, and Forcados indiscriminately.

² Akassa.

³ Shakri, Zakri, Jakry, Jekri, Zekri, Dzekri, Dsekiri, Izekri, Ishekiri, Tchekre, &c.

strengthening the British position in the country, and in inducing a most friendly feeling towards Europeans among the neighbouring tribes.

The districts of the central and eastern divisions of the Protectorate, from west to east, are Brass,¹ New Calabar, Bonny, Opobo, and Old Calabar (the capital), which may be considered to constitute the *real* Oil Rivers. Brass has, of late years, been the scene of an Imperial expedition,² and therefore is of more than ordinary interest. As a mouth of the Niger it has been known to Europeans for many years, for the reader will remember that it was here that the Landers eventually found themselves at the termination of their voyage of discovery;³ but long before the interesting problem had been solved by the two brothers, Brass and the adjacent Oil Rivers had been the resort of traders in slaves and palm-oil, who, however, troubled themselves but little about such geographical questions as whence came this great river. The trading factories⁴ are situated a short distance within the river's mouth, close to the native village of Tuon;⁵ the capital of the Brass chiefs being some thirty miles higher up the river, at Nimbé.⁶ Besides these places, the only other town of any importance is Fishtown, built among the mangrove swamps, about two miles from the factories. Numerous creeks connect the river with the main stream of the Lower Niger on the west, and with the St. Nicholas,⁷ St. Barbara, St. Bartholomew, Sombrero, New Calabar, Bonny, and other

¹ Portuguese name, Rio Bento; the English name, Brass, was given to the place from the brass utensils (*Neptunes*) and rods, which were the principal imports a century ago.

² 1895.

³ *Vide* page 148.

⁴ Cable communication with Lagos and Bonny.

⁵ Tuwon, Twa, Brass-town.

⁶ Nembe, Dembe, Nempé, Numbe, Itebu; and, by old traders, simply Brass.

⁷ Native name, Kola.

Delta rivers on the east, while the creek leading from Brass to Akassa is of some considerable size, and navigable for river steamers drawing six or seven feet of water. The people of Brass¹ are looked on by most of their neighbours as inferiors, and though some of the chiefs are wealthy and powerful, the bulk of the population consists of slaves, either bought from the inland tribes,² or born in the households of the chiefs or headmen, many of whom were themselves originally slaves.

The Brass district³ has been, perhaps, the most difficult part with which the Protectorate Government has had to deal, since it has been impossible to get thoroughly in touch with the people, owing principally to the existence of what the chiefs considered a grievance. In 1856 the Brass chiefs concluded a treaty with Great Britain, by which they agreed to give up all connection with the traffic in slaves, and to deal only in such legitimate commodities as palm-oil, receiving besides the price of the oil a duty or "comey." These chiefs were not producers, but merely middle-men, and by sending their canoes and trading-boys up-country they were able to obtain, from the riverside natives of the Lower Niger, a large amount of oil. The operations of Macgregor Laird and independent trading vessels on the Niger told on the Brass trading chiefs, since their markets were tapped by the white men; and upwards of twenty years ago they laid their complaints before the British Consul. They, however, received little satisfaction, but hoping that the Government would close their markets to European traders and thus restore them to themselves, they signed further treaties. The climax came

¹ The old tribal marks were six short perpendicular incisions between eye and ear.

² Principally Ibos.

³ The language spoken in the Brass district is a dialect of Ijo, Idzo, or Oru.

with the proclamation of the Protectorate of the Niger territories and the grant of a charter to the National African Company, by which the position of the Brass chiefs was made worse than ever. Previous to this they had only European competition to fight against, but now they found that they had been virtually cut off altogether from their former Niger markets, being considered by the terms of the charter foreigners, and consequently unable to trade in the Company's territory without paying the regulation duties and taking out licences. Undoubtedly they had a grievance, although, had they been less conservative in their ideas, they might, perhaps, have developed new markets in other directions. This they neglected to do, preferring to dispute the right of the Company to interfere with them. In a few years they became inveterate smugglers, and their lawless conduct resulted in more than one brush with the Company's customs officials, who were obliged to see their regulations observed. Chagrined at the apparent disregard paid to their complaints by the British Government, the Brass chiefs grew disaffected, and, in 1893, even threatened to drive all Europeans from the river, though this was prevented by the arrival on the spot of two men-of-war and two hundred men of the Niger Coast Constabulary. But their hatred of the Niger Company still continued, and they swore to revenge themselves for the loss of their markets.

Akassa has been mentioned in a previous chapter as the main depôt of the Company, and situated on the right bank of the Niger, a few miles within the Nun mouth. Here, at times, there are enormous stores of ivory and valuable goods awaiting shipment to England, as well as a considerable quantity of European commodities for stocking the up-river stations, but as a trading post it is of little or no importance, and, consequently, besides the beach-master and sundry

mechanics and labourers, there are few permanent officials, though the Agent-General periodically visits the place. No more favourable object for plunder can be imagined, and the Brass people were, of course, well aware of this. The Company's officials had, on several occasions, been warned that an attack on Akassa was in contemplation, but as the Brass people showed no signs of carrying their threats into execution, the oft-repeated warning began to be disregarded, and little or no increase was made in the garrison of the place. In January, 1895, matters came to a head, and unknown to the officials of the Niger Coast Protectorate in charge of the Brass district, the chiefs organized a monster expedition, in which every village was represented by a contingent of armed men and a fleet of war canoes. On the 27th January, the Vice-Consul at Brass received an anonymous letter warning him of the coming attack on Akassa; but, having no force at his command, he was unable to do more than send on the letter to the Agent-General of the Company, who was at the time at Akassa. This officer, although not believing that the Brass people would venture to attack in force, decided to take precautions against any small raids which might possibly be meditated, and stationed himself at night at the head of the landing-stage, with a machine gun commanding the river. A small steamer was sent to patrol the creeks leading to Brass, but owing to the darkness of the night and a heavy mist hanging over the river (here a mile or so in width), the Brass canoes crossed unobserved, and the force¹ landing some distance below the officials' quarters, commenced to attack from a position which was not exposed to the fire of the gun at the landing-stage. The fight which ensued was of the fiercest description, and, though the few Europeans and many of the native *employés* made their

¹ About two thousand men.

escape, Akassa was completely sacked, and numbers of Krubois and other native servants of the Company were either slaughtered or taken prisoners. The appearance at the river's mouth of a steamer, which was mistaken for a man-of-war, caused the victorious Brass men to beat a hasty retreat, though not before they had secured their loot and their prisoners. These unfortunates were conveyed to Nimbé, where, on Sacrifice Island, they were publicly executed and then eaten by the frenzied savages.¹ This revolting finale to their revenge the Brass people afterwards explained, by asserting "that it was their ancient custom to kill and eat their prisoners of war; and, also, that at this time it was thought advisable to have a big human feast in order to get rid of an epidemic of smallpox then prevalent in the district."²

Within a few days the Consul-General was on the spot, and, in conjunction with a naval brigade, the Niger Coast troops, towards the end of February, commenced an attack on Nimbé. The Brass men offered a stout resistance, but the Ogbolomambri quarter of Nimbé and Fishtown were burned to the ground, and the inhabitants driven into the bush. The result was not altogether satisfactory, as the chiefs, for the most part, refused to surrender, and it was impossible to follow them into the intricacies of the vast mangrove swamp. Moreover, the actual damage done to their property was immaterial, as their huts could be rebuilt in a few days, and they were able to carry away in their flight all their belongings.³ Later in the year, Sir John Kirk, G.C.M.G., was sent

¹ Twenty-four *employés* were killed at Akassa, and their heads were taken away as trophies. Forty-three prisoners were eaten at Nimbé, and twenty-five others were eventually released.

² *Report by Sir John Kirk on the Disturbances at Brass. Africa. No. 3 (1896).*

³ They paid a heavy fine later in the year.

from England to inquire¹ into the cause of the rising, when eventually the matter was amicably settled, and peace re-established in the district.

The New Calabar district is situated between Brass and Bonny, and has only one important trading-station—at Degama, where the Vice-Consulate is established on board the hulk *George Shotton*,² anchored in the Sombrero River, at a distance of about thirty miles from the sea. The rivers and creeks in this part of the Protectorate are numerous; in fact, in the districts of New Calabar and Bonny there is almost as much water as dry land, and Degama can be approached from the sea, by ascending either the Sombrero River (the most direct route), the New Calabar River, and the Degama Creek, or the Bonny River and Boler and Cawthorne Creeks. Like their neighbours of Brass, the people of New Calabar have had a market grievance against the Royal Niger Company, but satisfactory arrangements have now been arrived at. About eighty miles due north of Degama lies Oguta Lake, situated at a distance of some twenty miles in a direct line from Akra Ugidi, on the left bank of the Lower Niger. From this lake flows the Oratshi River,³ which, after receiving from the Niger a stream, known

¹ Many interesting facts were elicited at this inquiry. The king of the Brass people, Chief Koko, had originally professed Christianity, but he and many of his followers had returned to fetishism, "because they had lost faith in the white man's God, who had allowed them to be oppressed." Chief Warri and a few other headmen adhered to Christianity, and refused to allow their twenty-five prisoners to be sacrificed.

² This is only a temporary arrangement, and when permanent quarters have been erected on shore the hulk will be removed to the mouth of the Bonny River, to serve as a sanatorium. At present it not only provides quarters for the officials, but is also used as a prison, hospital, custom-house, &c.

³ In its lower course, called the Engenni.

as the Ndoni Creek, empties itself into the Sombrero River almost opposite Degama. The New Calabar chiefs obtained a great proportion of their palm-oil from the Oguta markets, which were, however, closed to them by virtue of treaties made between the Oguta chiefs and the National African Company. This gave rise to bad feeling between the New Calabar people and the Company, until, eventually, the boundary between New Calabar and the Company's territories was fixed at Idu, a town about half-way between Degama and Oguta Lake.

The next district on the east is Bonny, with headquarters close to the town of the same name.¹ The Bonny River was at one time by far the most important of all the Oil Rivers, and in the days of the slave trade was the principal port on the coast,² but of late years, owing chiefly to the opening up of New Calabar and Opobo, it has declined considerably. The settlement, consisting of several European factories, is built on the left bank of the river, and the native town lies within a few hundred yards, in a low and swampy situation, while, half a mile or so beyond and nearer to the sea, is the Mission Station—a remarkable contrast (in the matter of cleanliness) to the town. The people are of a very low type, thoroughly sodden with trade-gin, and, until within the last few years, addicted to every species of vice. But the place has improved somewhat under the new administration, and cannibalism and other ancient customs have been suppressed.³ At a distance of about twenty-five miles up the river from Bonny stands the town of Okrika,⁴ whose inhabitants are a

¹ The African Direct Telegraph Company has a station here.

² During the palmy days of the slave trade it is said that 16,000 slaves were exported annually from Bonny.

³ The native names for Bonny are Obáne, Ibáne, or Ebáne. The principal industry of the people is straw-plaiting.

⁴ The Okrika people keep large herds of cattle, which is somewhat remarkable for these parts.

continual source of trouble to the consul. They are confirmed cannibals, eating all captives of war, and have on several occasions been convicted and punished for this. In 1887 they were fined £200 for killing and eating one hundred and sixty members of a neighbouring tribe, and, in 1892, a number of Okrikans were tried for cannibalism and sentenced to penal servitude. As British authority increases it is hoped that these unruly savages will be persuaded to lay aside their barbarous customs.

The Opobo district, lying between Bonny and Old Calabar, has given less trouble to the officials of the Protectorate than any other district, the chiefs upholding the British authority, and assisting in the work of civilization and progress. This may, perhaps, be accounted for in two ways—the punishment dealt out to them in 1889, when their chief, the notorious Ja Ja, was deported; or the respect felt for Consul-General MacDonald,¹ who brought back Ja Ja's corpse to Opobo for burial. Ja Ja was one of the most enlightened chiefs of the country, and had risen from the position of slave to that of headman, having amassed considerable wealth in his trading transactions. His inveterate foe was Oko Jumbo of Bonny, whose antecedents had been similar to those of Ja Ja, and who had also amassed wealth and become a chief. Both men had been Bonny slaves, and were at one time friends; but, having quarrelled, Ja Ja established himself at Opobo. A prolonged war was waged between Opobo and Bonny,² and Ja Ja, being the aggressor, was summoned by the British Consul to desist. This he refused to do, and in other ways made himself generally objectionable to the British traders,³ until men-of-war arrived and blockaded the river, when Ja Ja

¹ Now Sir Claude MacDonald, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., British Minister at Peking.

² Each of the two chiefs had a force of some 8000 men, armed with modern weapons, who fought in large war-canoes.

³ He levied "comey" on each trader to the extent of £70.

was removed from the scene to St. Vincent (Cape Verd). Here he remained a prisoner at large for some time, and, after petitioning the Government on several occasions, it was at length considered advisable to allow him to return to his country, on the condition that he renounced all his former rights. Accordingly he was transferred to Teneriffe, where he was to meet the Consul-General of the Niger Coast Protectorate, and be conducted back to Opobo; but before this could be carried out he unfortunately died. His chief companion during his exile was a favourite bull-dog, whom he facetiously named Oko Jumbo, after his old enemy of Bonny.

The European factories are built on both banks of the river close to its mouth, and the native town of Opobo lies about four miles higher up stream, and on the right bank. Above this little is known of the country, but every effort is being made to open it up,¹ and, at the end of 1896, a successful mission visited the important town of Bendi, which had hitherto been closed to Europeans, and treaties were negotiated with the chiefs. The distance from Opobo is about one hundred and eighty miles, and previous to the visit of Major Leonard the place had been regarded as of most evil repute, for in its neighbourhood is supposed to exist the supreme juju court²—the very name of which is a terror to all Oil River natives.

It remains only to describe the home district—Old Calabar, which in extent and importance is superior to any of the outlying districts of the Protectorate. The country hereabouts is watered by several large rivers, the principal of which are the Kwo-Ibo and Cross³ on the west, and the Old Calabar, Kwa (or Akwa), and Akpayafe on the east. Of

¹ Military posts have recently been established at Acquettah and Ngwa, some distance inland.

² "Long Juju." *Ibid* Chapter XX.

³ Native name, Oyono.

these the last four unite at a short distance from the sea, to form what is called the Old Calabar Estuary,¹ and the Cross River flows down from the far interior in a long and winding course, having on its banks numerous towns and villages peopled by a variety of interesting tribes. "The natives of Old Calabar and the lower Cross River," says Consul Johnston,² "belong to the Efik race. In language, and, no doubt, in origin, they are allied to the Ibos of the Niger Delta. They have scarcely been settled at Old Calabar more than a century and a half. Originally they came from the Ibibio district on the Cross River, and drove out and partly supplanted the Akpa tribe, who originally inhabited Old Calabar. The Efik people are now much mixed in blood, having imported many slaves from the Cameroons."³

The European settlement, as well as the native town (Duke Town) of Old Calabar,⁴ is distant about forty miles from the sea, and, owing to the vast improvements which have been carried out within the last few years, the place has been transformed into a picturesque and sanitary town—without doubt the healthiest station in the Oil Rivers. This is partly accounted for by the fact that the Consulate and public offices have been built on a hill some two hundred feet above the river, and consequently above the malarial mists rising off the swamps. By the side of the river a wide marina, planted with trees, has been constructed; hospitals, barracks, and various public buildings have been erected; and the native town, usually in these parts a dirty and

¹ Ten or eleven miles wide, and having numerous wooded islands.

² Now Sir H. H. Johnston, K.C.B., H.B.M.'s Consul-General at Tunis.

³ *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*. Volume x. (1888), page 754.

⁴ The other important native towns in the immediate neighbourhood are Fish Town and Creek Town.

unsanitary spot, has been placed under strict regulations. Life at Old Calabar has many advantages over other places on the Coast; social gatherings, at which English ladies (from the Missions and elsewhere) are to be found, relieve the monotony of the officials' existence; while such pastimes as cricket, lawn tennis, golf, and even cycling—things unheard of on the West Coast of Africa a few years ago—have become popular forms of amusement.

The interior of the district has been explored in several directions, and advanced posts have been established at Uwet, at Itu (sixty miles up the Cross River), and at Ediba (eighty miles higher up). The Cross River furnishes the most important waterway in this part of the Protectorate, and, as far back as 1842, was ascended by Beecroft for a distance of nearly 200 miles—to the rapids, which now form one of the Anglo-German boundary points. The whole course of the river lying in British territory has now been brought under the control of the Protectorate, and is patrolled by an armed stern-wheel steamer. The natives have given some trouble, and several punitive expeditions have been found necessary; but the country is gradually accepting the new order of things, and is settling down to peaceful pursuits. One of the first expeditions of the modern administration was directed against the town of Okerike, whose chief had been guilty of murder. The town was burned, and the chief executed. Then followed a display of arms in the Okoyon country to put a stop to human sacrifices, and on the Kwo Ibo for a similar purpose, though in neither case was it necessary to fire a shot. In August, 1895, an expedition, consisting of 200 of the Constabulary,¹ with native allies, proceeded about 150 miles up the Cross River to punish the Ediba people, when the town of Ediba was shelled and

¹ *Vide* page 287 (footnote).

destroyed. In the spring of 1896 a second expedition was despatched to the same country, and one of the chiefs hanged; while, at the beginning of 1898, some severe fighting took place at the town of Ekuri, above Ediba, resulting in the burning of the town.

Such is a general view of the Niger Coast Protectorate, whose existence, though short, has been long enough to prove that the care bestowed on its initial organization has not been thrown away. In the matter of trade it is too early to expect any enormous improvements; the trade of the region was well developed before the new administration came into being, but the more settled form of government has been most beneficial to the British traders in assisting them to open up new markets, and in abolishing the monopoly hitherto held by the "middle-men" chiefs. The actual figures have remained almost unchanged, averaging a total trade of about £1,600,000 per annum; but we must remember that, so far, there has been little time for developing the resources of the interior, for the main object has been to firmly establish British rule in the coast regions. This may now be considered to be an accomplished fact, and a step-by-step advance is being made inland; but the country has drawbacks not possessed by any other of our West African possessions; being so intersected by creeks and swamps, road-making is almost an impossibility, and railways can never be hoped for, so that the waterways must ever remain the principal trade routes of the Venice-like Protectorate, and the sole method of advance is to push military posts and trading stations to the heads of these waterways. The time may come when it may be possible to remove all Government and commercial headquarters away from the pestilential neighbourhood of the coast to the healthier climate of the interior; but until the native officials have been sufficiently educated

to carry on the administrative duties on the coast, this cannot be hoped for. Sir Ralph Moor (the present Consul-General) is fully alive to this, and, in his latest report,¹ says, "I would suggest that some scheme might be drawn up for the sending of natives, when they have obtained sufficient proficiency in the schools of West Africa, to India or Ceylon, where, after a short course in the native colleges and schools, they might for a period be employed in the departments of administration. By this system of education in a country where the object lessons of more advanced civilization would be before them, they could, no doubt, become competent and capable administrators in their own country." In the matter of the rudimentary education of the natives, government schools have not as yet been established, but grants have been made to the various Missions for the development of industrial schools, which have proved of inestimable benefit. The chiefs very frequently send their sons abroad to be educated, and a considerable number come to England—some of them receiving a University education.

The principal exports from the Protectorate are palm-oil, kernels and rubber, trade in the latter, however, being at present only in its infancy; other products of value are ivory, ebony, cocoa, and coffee, the two last being carefully cultivated.² Of these exports about 65 per cent. go to Great Britain, and 25 per cent. to Germany, while of the imports about 75 per cent. are from Great Britain, 15 per cent. from Holland, and 10 per cent. from Germany.

¹ *Foreign Office Annual Series* (1897). No. 1834. Africa.

² The returns for 1895-6 give the following values of exports: palm-oil, £514,302; kernels, £296,396; rubber, £11,787; ivory, £6778; ebony, £5190; cocoa, £1532; coffee, £778.

VALUE OF DUTIABLE IMPORTS INTO THE NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE.

ARTICLES.	1892-3.	1893-4.	1894-5.	1895-6.
	£	£	£	£
Ale, beer, and porter . .	2,373	2,717	2,948	2,282
Brandy	519	397	332	368
Gin and Geneva . .	68,490	160,794	107,704	109,607
Gunpowder	8,755	11,507	8,237	8,734
Guns (Danes)	18,185	5,833	8,876	3,127
Guns (percussion) . .	506	7,464	—	274
Lead	816	1,333	391	406
Liqueurs	783	526	598	499
Rum	51,722	55,223	34,326	34,302
Salt	11,993	16,695	—	12,205
Spirits (various) . .	—	90	33	12
Tobacco	61,358	75,217	50,322	65,674
Whisky	1,580	1,738	1,791	2,138
Wines	2,673	3,822	3,661	3,293
TOTAL (about)	230,000	343,300	231,360	242,925
DUTY LEVIED	92,692	169,218	117,423	151,244

All other imports are free, and consist of such articles as are in request by the natives of all parts of West Africa, and of necessaries for the British officials and traders. As to the duties, a word of explanation will, perhaps, be advisable. In order to carry out the spirit of the Brussels Act, a new table of duties was instituted, to take effect from the 22nd

November, 1895, the principal changes being as follows : duties on spirituous liquors raised from 1s. per gallon to 2s. ; on gunpowder, from 2*d.* per pound to 6*d.* ; on flint-lock trade guns (Danes), from 1s. each to 2s. 6*d.* The new tariff did not, however, affect the stock in the hands of the traders, who moreover had ample notice of the intended change, consequently, as the Annual Report says, "before the new duties were enforced, the firms trading in the Protectorate¹ imported very considerable stocks of spirits at the lower rate of duty. The result has not been a loss to the Government, but has been unfortunate from a commercial point of view." To remedy this in the future, Sir Ralph Moor suggests "that the plan adopted in the German Colonies be carried out, i.e. that from a certain date a higher rate of duty is leviable on all stocks in hand and on all dutiable material afloat coming to the Protectorate. By this means the adjustment of prices must necessarily be done by the commercial community at one stroke."

The establishment at Old Calabar of extensive botanical gardens for experimenting with economic plants was one of the first acts of the Protectorate, and has proved a great success, not only in discovering what the soil and climate are capable of producing, but also in teaching the natives less primitive methods of agriculture than they have been in the habit of pursuing. As far as the interior has been prospected, little hope is entertained of finding new varieties of indigenous products suitable for export,² though, possibly,

¹ The following are the firms now trading in the Niger Coast Protectorate: African Association of Liverpool (Benin, Warri, Sapele, Bonny, Opobo, and Old Calabar); Miller Bros.; James Pinnock & Co.; Bey & Co.; West African Company of Hamburg; and a few small houses.

² The Protectorate is remarkable for the absence of gums, resins, and oil-seeds.

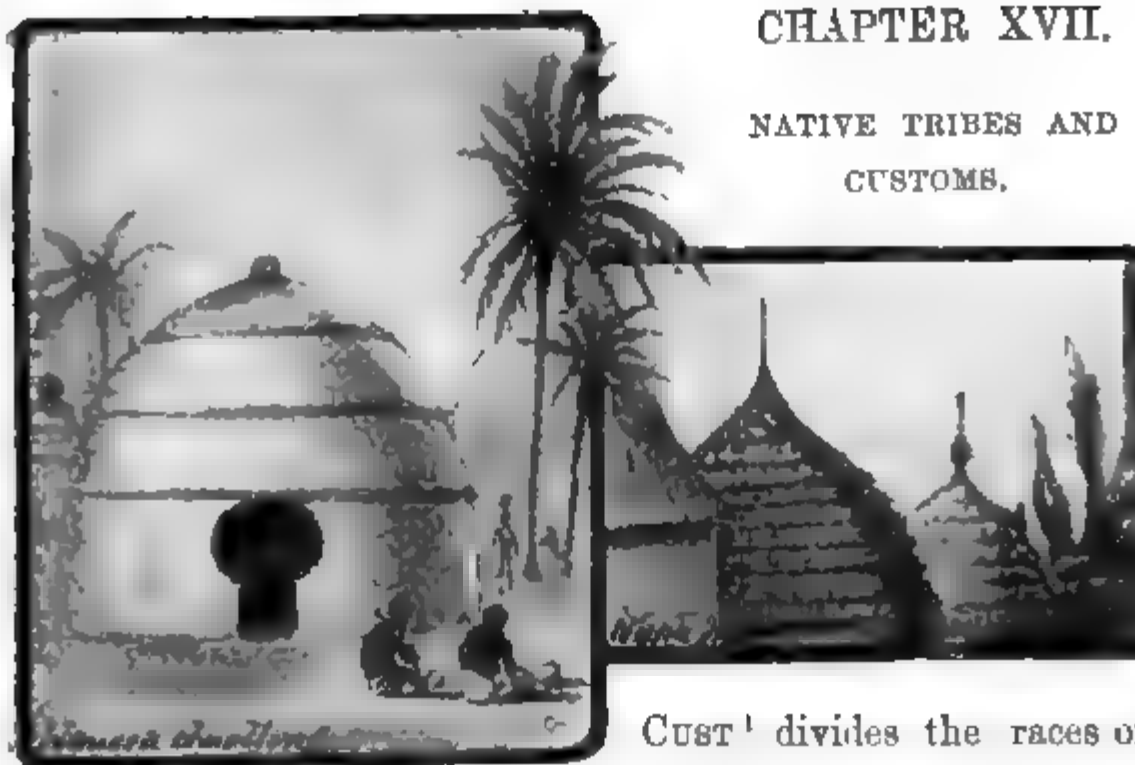
rubber may be forthcoming in greater quantities; it is, therefore, all the more important that the natives should be encouraged in cultivating such new plants as are likely to thrive, and of these it is considered that coffee, cocoa, cinnamon, arrowroot, jute, &c., will prove the most remunerative.



BAND BOYS, NIGER COAST CONSTABULARY.

CHAPTER XVII.

NATIVE TRIBES AND CUSTOMS.



CUST¹ divides the races of Africa linguistically — a system which has many points in its favour, but is not entirely satisfactory, and in a country such as West Africa, which has been over-run at different periods by various wandering peoples, is not by any means reliable. Still, if grouping by language is not to be depended upon, the same may be said of any other classification of the present inhabitants of the British possessions in West Africa; for, a long period of inter-marriage between members of widely-different races has resulted in the defacement of distinctive peculiarities. This applies more particularly to the tribes dwelling at some considerable distance from the coast, who have been influenced by the immigration of such people as the Fulahs. As far as the indigenous pagan negro is concerned there is little difficulty, and in those parts still untouched by the Mohammedan invader, the various aboriginal tribes can be grouped both according to their language and to their general outward appearance.

The most popular method of classifying the natives of this

¹ *A Sketch of the Modern Languages of Africa*, by R. N. Cust. 1883.



portion of Africa is under three heads, viz. Hamitic, Negroid, and Negro. The Hamites are supposed to have had their origin in south-western Asia, to have immigrated into Africa at some unknown time, and to be represented in the Western Soudan by the Berber division of the Libyan group, to which, as previously pointed out, possibly belong the Fulahs, the Bornus, and the Borgus. The Negroid is the link between the Hamite and the Negro, resulting from intermarriage, while the Negro is the West African pure and simple, whose blood has remained unadulterated by the foreigner. This classification is, at first sight, clear enough, but an element of confusion appears when we find negroes described as "sons of Ham," and Mohammedans in general spoken of as "Arabs." Practically, we have only to deal with Hamites, Negroes, and a cross between the two—the first and last wholly Mohammedan,¹ the Negro in the main pagan, though where he has been conquered, Mohammedan. As to languages, the Hamites of this part of Africa have only two—Fulah and Tibu; the Negroids two—Hausa and Kanuri,² while the Negroes speak a diversity of distinct languages and innumerable dialects. Of the Fulahs and Hausas perhaps enough has been said in former chapters, and, being Mohammedans, they have no strange customs worth mentioning; the tribes which we propose discussing may, therefore, be summed up as pagan negroes, and it will be more convenient to enumerate them according to the particular British possession in which they dwell.³

In the Colony of Gambia are found the Mandengas,⁴ Wolofs, and Serers, of whom the Mandengas and Wolofs,

¹ The Borgus are not Mohammedans, but it is uncertain if they can be called Hamites.

² In Bornu, *vide* Chapter XII.

³ The list does not pretend to be exhaustive, and only the better known tribes are dealt with.

⁴ Mandingo, Mandengo, or more correctly, Mandé-nga. See page 22. The principal branch of the Wolof people is the Jolof.

Mohammedan negroes, are the most important. The country of the Mandengas, which stretches some considerable distance inland, is divided into numerous petty states, and the people are not only good husbandmen but keen traders, with an old-established trade between Timbuctoo and Sierra Leone and other parts. By some authorities, the Mandengas are considered to be non-indigenous, but, like the Fulahs and others, of eastern origin; there is, however, nothing either in their language or in their features to mark them as foreigners, and the general opinion is that they are pure negroes, though they may have shifted their locality at some remote period. They are distinguishable from the Wolofs as being slightly less dark, and their hair less woolly.

The principal native tribes of Sierra Leone and its hinterland are the Timanis, Bulloms, Mendis, Limbas, Saffrokos, Konos, Gallinas, Sarakoles, and Kurankos, none of whom, except perhaps the Sarakoles, have as yet come under Mohammedan influence. These are the actual inhabitants of the country—owners of the land—and not the descendants of what are termed “liberated Africans,” who reside in Freetown.¹ The Timanis² (Timné, Temné, &c.) are the dominant race in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone proper, to whom the Bulloms owe allegiance; whilst the other most noticeable people are the Mendis, or, as they prefer to be called, Kossoos,³ who inhabit the country north of Sherbro; and the Sarakolés (“Red-men”), who are also known as Soninkés.

¹ The population of Freetown, according to the census of 1891, is composed of about seventy-five per cent. of non-indigenous blacks.

² A fine race of people, divided into many minor tribes; mostly agriculturists, and found principally in the country between the Rokelle and Little Scarcies Rivers.

³ Winwoode Reade says that Kossoo signifies “wild boar”; he also states that they fight with swords in preference to all other weapons.

Although the Kroo- or Kru-man¹ is not in reality a native of British West Africa, he is so intimately connected with everything relating to the West Coast, that he is worthy of taking his place among the African subjects of Great Britain. He is, as a rule, the first native with whom the Englishman comes in contact, as gangs of Krumen are taken on board all men-of-war and mail steamers immediately on arrival on the Coast. Burton says of him that he was created for the palm-oil trade, and as paddler, labourer, and general servant, he is found wherever there is a colony of white men. Without the "Kruboys," life in these regions would be bereft of almost all its charms, or at any rate of one of its greatest sources of amusement, for the queer members of this unique tribe furnish the English exile with many a mirthful moment—and at times when mirth comes not too readily. Probably there exists no people in the world in whose composition are gathered so many opposite characteristics. In physique they are perfect models of manly strength, yet for fighting purposes they are absolutely useless, having been proved time after time to be arrant cowards. As servants, they are most hard-working and loyal, though while protecting their masters from the extortions of other natives, they will not hesitate to rob them freely themselves. Again, to meet them on British territory, they appear to be thoroughly civilized and friendly, yet instances have occurred of British vessels being wrecked on their coast, when they have proved

¹ Kru is a contraction of Krao. "A small tribe living about halfway between Cape Mesurado and Cape Palmas, about twenty-five miles above, or to the north-west of, the latter. The district extends about twenty or thirty miles along the coast, and perhaps as much into the interior. They had originally five chief settlements, which, beginning from the north-west, are Little Kru; Settra Kru, the chief town; Krubah; Nanna Kru, or Kru Settrah; and King Will's Town."—*Burton*. The usual tribal marking of the Kru people is a broad black band tattooed down the forehead.

themselves to be the veriest savages, their terrible greed for loot overcoming everything, although every man had, at one time or other, served Europeans as a faithful servant. The ordinary Englishman, however, sees more of their good points than of their bad; shipwrecks on the Kru coast are fortunately rare, and it is seldom that Kruboyes are called upon to fight even in self-defence; while petty theft and dishonesty are things which, though annoying, can be guarded against. Possibly the Nigger Minstrel had his origin in the Kruboy, for few other natives of the coast are of a particularly witty nature, whereas the Kruboy is full of chaff and wit—"the Irishman of West Africa," as he has been called. Like the Chinaman, he has an English of his own, and there is a certain fascination for the newly arrived Englishman in picking up this African "pidgin" jargon—he has the satisfaction of feeling that he has learnt a new language without having recourse to any lengthy Ollendorffian process. Many of their words are derived from the Portuguese,¹ and though their vocabulary is very limited, they can always make themselves understood to Englishmen, their rendering of the language, quaint as it is, being thoroughly expressive.²

¹ The commonest Kru-English words are *sabby* (know) and *palaver* (talk), both of Portuguese origin. Palaver has developed into a wider meaning, resembling the Chinaman's "pidgin," i.e. business.

² What could be more expressive than "Sweet mouf palaver" for blarney, "fool palaver" for nonsense, "sarce palaver" for abusive language, "God-man palaver" for missionary teaching? or what could be simpler than their proverb "One day no be all day," equivalent to "It's a long lane that has no turning"? The word "lib" (live) has, by an attempt to reproduce the native idiom, assumed a peculiar and important character in Kru-English, and varies considerably in its meaning; thus for a servant to tell a caller that his master "no lib" merely implies that he is not at home, and in this sense the word is used freely for animate or inanimate things. Another use of "lib" is in conjunction with the word "for," when its meaning is quite different; "he lib for go we-

The peculiarity of this small tribe is their great love of home ; their women refuse to travel, consequently the men go away only for short periods of time. They hire themselves out in gangs under a headman, who makes the bargain with the employer, and who is responsible for the service and behaviour of the gang ; the engagement generally being for "One time yam come up, twel' moon." The home-coming of the Kruboy after the performance of his service is one of the most interesting sights to be witnessed on the West Coast. As the steamer, conveying the Kruboy, nears their homes—Cavally, Cape Palmas, Grand Cess, or whatever the place may be—a gun is fired, when immediately scores of canoes shoot out from the shore and come alongside. The steamer "lies to" for a few minutes, and the Kruboy throw their year's earnings (guns, powder, bales of cloth, &c.) into the canoes or into the water, then go overboard themselves into a canoe if one is handy, otherwise into the sea—it appears to matter little which. Everyone yells and jabbers and laughs, and by the time the home-comers have reached the shore they have probably had all their goods appropriated by the occupants of other canoes ; yet, so long as the community gets the earnings of its members, everybody is thoroughly satisfied.

The natives of the Gold Coast are classified linguistically as "Tshi-speaking peoples,"¹ viz. :—the Ahantas, Fantis,² Wassaws, Tshiforos or Tufels, Safwhis, Denkeras, Gamans, Assins, Adansis, Ashantis, Akims, Akwapims, Akwarnus, &c.—all true negroes. "With the exception of Kumassi and Djuabin," says Ellis, "there is no purely native assemblage

country" signifies that a certain Kruboy has returned to his native land, "lib for die" that he is dead.

¹ *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, by Major A. B. Ellis. 1887.

There is a legend that two brothers, who were starving, found two edible plants—the *fan* and the *shan*. After eating they founded the kingdoms of Fanti and Ashanti.

of buildings worthy of the name of town. In such a country, where men reside in a number of small and semi-isolated communities, mere specks in a vast tract of impenetrable forest, ideas permeate but slowly; and notwithstanding an intercourse, on the part of the inhabitants of the sea-coast, with Europeans, which has existed for more than four hundred years, the Tshi¹-speaking tribes are now much in the same condition, both socially and morally, as they were at the time of the Portuguese discoveries." This is equally true of most of the pagan negroes all along the Coast; they have made little change in their habits, and, even when they have received a veneer of civilization, they will revert, at a moment's notice, to the worst stage of savagery.

Coming to Lagos and its hinterland we find the numerous tribes who speak the Yoruba language, generally described as Yorubas,² inhabitants of a kingdom at one time more powerful than either Dahomey or Ashanti. The principal tribes, who, although all are now under the protection of Great Britain, still maintain their separate forms of government, are the Ketus, Egbas, Jebus, Ekitis, Ibadans, Oyos (Yorubas proper), Ijesas, Ifes, Ondos, Egbados, Okeodans, Ados, Aworis, Ig-bessas, and the inhabitants of the town of Lagos and its neighbourhood (known as Ekos), who formerly belonged to the native kingdoms of Appa, Pokra, Badagry, Lagos, Palma, Lekki, and Mahin, as well as such people as the Ogbos, and Jakris or Zakris. We have mentioned elsewhere how the Fulahs, at the beginning of the century, gradually split up the Yoruba kingdom, and though some of the tribes have been

¹ Chi, Twi, Ochi, Oji, &c.; "the most harmonious language in Africa;" the dialects are numerous, Akan being the Court language; the Scriptures have been translated into the Akwapim dialect, which is considered best suited for literary purposes.

² Originally called Eycos or Oyos; the French call them Nagos. *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, by Colonel A. B. Ellis. 1894.

converted by the zealous Muslims, the majority of them still remain pagans.

Eastward of Lagos, in the Niger Protectorate, there dwell numerous pagan tribes, speaking a variety of languages, but since they have never been thoroughly studied by ethnological experts, it is impossible to classify them otherwise than according to the localities in which they dwell and the languages which they speak. What relation one tribe bears to another will probably never be known, and the most that we can hope to do is to forget the past and deal with the various peoples as we find them. In the neighbourhood of Benin the people are known as Binis; eastward come the Sobos; and, between the latter and the sea, the great Jakri tribe. In the Niger Delta are found the Idzos (with several off-shoots) and the Ibos, who are subdivided into many minor tribes; while in the eastern division of the Niger Coast Protectorate are a great variety of people, though mostly allied in language with the Ibos. In the immediate neighbourhood of Old Calabar (as mentioned in the last chapter) the inhabitants belong to the Efik race, supposed by some authorities to be connected with the Ibos, but by others to be a distinct people; to the north and north-west the tribes are almost entirely pure Ibos; while in the country watered by the Upper Cross River, the language of the people shows traces of a connection with Bantu.¹ With regard to the pagan tribes of Nigeria² (the territories of the Royal Niger Company), in ascending the Lower Niger from the sea, three distinct tribes³

¹ Sir H. H. Johnston calls the languages of these tribes, *Semi-Bantu*. Bantu proper commences a little to the east of British territory, i.e. in the German Cameroons.

² A more detailed account of the tribes inhabiting the banks of the Niger and Benué Rivers will be found in *Up the Niger*.

³ It would perhaps be more correct to use the word *nation* when speaking of the main tribes.

are met with, viz. :—the Idzos¹ (including the Orus), the Ibos,² and the Igaras, whose country on the left bank extends as far north as the Niger-Benué confluence. West of Lokoja, in the bend of the Middle and Lower Niger, dwell several pagan tribes—the Kukurukus, Igbiras, Ogidis, Owurus, Bunus, Yagbas, and others; while of the pagan Nupés³ and Borgus we have already spoken.

Passing from Lokoja, up the Benué River, we find that Mohammedan influence is hard at work, and few of the pagan tribes are now wholly independent, though, with the assistance of British protection, they are still enabled to keep their countries. The Igbira tribe inhabits the country surrounding the confluence, then come the Basas on the right bank, and the Akpotos on the left, followed by the Aragos and the Mitshis. Further up stream lies the Juko country, and higher still, in the upper reaches of the Benué, are the numerous and wild Batta tribes. Many of these Niger people speak distinct languages (with various dialects), the principal of which, so far as they have been investigated, being Idzo, Ibo, Igara, Igbira, Mitshi, Juko, and Battawa. In addition to these, there are the three important languages—Nupé, Fulah, and Hausa, the last named understood by nearly every native in the country. Of the numerous dialects, in many cases differing widely from the parent tongue, we may mention that languages resembling Yoruba are spoken by several of the tribes inhabiting the country westward of Lokoja, while many Yoruba words are met with in the Igara

¹ Ijo, Ijau, Ejo, Jo.

² Minor tribes: Asabas, Onitshas, Okos, Atanis, Akris, Odekwes, Osipitis, 'Nsubes, Umweris, 'Nteges, Anams, &c.

³ The aborigines of Nupé are said to be represented now by the Agabis, Ebes, Kpantis, Kakwanchis, Kupachis, and the Kedechis (Ganagas), the latter being the ferrymen and hippopotamus hunters of the country.



WOMEN OF NUPE.

[Toufeco'ima'gu' 323.]

language. Dialects of Nupé are also found among the outlying tribes of Nupé proper.

In treating of pagan manners and customs, it should be borne in mind, once and for all, that their customs are altogether based on religious motives,¹ while their mode of living, where it is uninfluenced by religion, is that of man in the earliest stages of emancipation from barbarism, or not unfrequently of man living in a state of actual barbarism. The tribes vary in the scale of so-called civilization according to their situation, and according to the length of time they have had intercourse with Europeans, for, although it is true that, in the main, the Coast tribes have altered little within the last four centuries, still, in comparison with the more inland pagans, they certainly hold enlightened views. At the same time it must be acknowledged that with this enlightenment has grown up a measure of vice—drunkenness, and a low state of morality—non-existent among the more primitive pagan peoples of the interior. In an enormous tract of country like that under discussion, the ways of the natives, of course, differ very considerably, and in the few pages of one short chapter we can do no more than generalize, leaving the reader, who is so inclined, to study the anthropological and ethnological details of the tribes in the works of travellers who have devoted their attention to one or two distinct peoples.

Physically, the negro dwelling on the coast is inferior to his brother of the interior, an exception, perhaps, being the Kruman, who can hold his own in strength and proportions with the members of almost any African tribe.² The reason generally given for this inferiority in the coast natives is

¹ *Vide* Chapter XX.

² There is one peculiarity about the Kruman's physique; above the waist his muscular development is almost Herculean, but his legs are decidedly weakly in appearance.

their craving for drink, with which for several generations they have been abundantly supplied by the European trader ; but, though possibly this may have something to say to it, the fact should not be forgotten that the climate of the coast is almost as baneful to the black man as to the white. The native born and bred in the swamps does not become acclimatized to his surroundings, but suffers from fever and other diseases altogether unknown to the tribes of the interior. With regard to the huts¹ in which the people dwell, we may say briefly that their architecture is of a very simple description, and depending almost entirely on the building material afforded by the particular part of the country. The rule is that the natives live in families, a certain number of families constituting a community or village, and a certain number of villages again forming what is generally termed a tribe. Each family, with the household slaves and attendants, lives apart, on the patriarchal system ; and the group of huts wherein the family has its abode is usually surrounded by some kind of enclosure wall. The ground plan of the hut may be either rectangular or circular, the former usually found near the coast, the latter in the interior, though why one should be preferred by certain tribes to the other has never been discovered. The materials used in their construction are always very similar, the walls being either of mud or wicker-work, or, occasionally, a combination of the two (wattle and daub), and the roof always of thatch.²

¹ The furniture usually found in the native huts consists of nothing more than a few stools, some cooking pots, and mats and skins. In some parts they build seats and couches of mud, and the Nupés sleep on beds of hardened mud under which are charcoal fires.

² Some of the pagan tribes in such outlying districts as the upper reaches of the Benué River plaster their roofs with mud ; and in large towns, like Kano and Kuka, flat roofs of mud are found, though these have been introduced chiefly by Arab traders from North Africa.

The natural occupations of all West Africans are agriculture and commerce, though owing to the fact that in many parts water forms the sole means of communication in the country, such employments as canoe-building and paddling are adopted by a considerable proportion of the inhabitants; and the craft of fishing is also much pursued. Among the industrial tribes we find weaving, dyeing, working in leather, brass and other metal, iron smelting, ivory carving, pottery making, gold-mining, and elephant and hippopotamus hunting—all followed as regular professions;¹ and, lastly, there are numerous people who hire themselves out for fighting purposes—notably the Sofas.² There are few tribes that are not periodically at war with their neighbours, and in such parts as are adjacent to the Mohammedan States every pagan goes about his business armed with flint-lock, sword, dagger, shield, bow and poisoned arrows, spears or some other weapons of defence, at all times dreading the raid of the conquering people. Towns and villages are frequently found fortified in various ways to resist attack,³ though this state of turmoil is gradually passing away before the steady advance of British authority. As a matter of fact the pagans, with, perhaps, a few exceptions, would willingly settle down to peaceful pursuits were they sure of protection, and members of many of the tribes, with very little encouragement, would become skilled artisans—workers in metals, leather, and sundry other things.⁴

The dress of the people varies with the locality which they

¹ There are few pastoral tribes among the negroes, principally for the reason that cattle do not thrive near the coast; the pagans of the interior keep herds and flocks, but only to supply their own wants, and the Bororoji, or wandering Fulahs, still retain their position as a great pastoral people.

² *Vide* page 44, and Chapter XXI. *passim*.

³ *Vide* page 35.

⁴ The Nupés and Yorubas in particular.

inhabit, the amount of clothes worn depending, as a rule, on the proximity of the tribe to a trading-station or to the Mohammedan country. Removed from both these influences the pagan goes almost naked, though even amongst the wildest tribes most of the men and married women wear some description of waist-cloth made of bark, skins, or other material. The absence of clothing is, however, made up for in a measure by personal adornment, more especially in the matter of the hair, to which immense attention is paid not only by the women, but also by the men. The more civilized of the women—in the neighbourhood of European factories—bind the head with a gaudy silk bandana, but the *coiffure* of the more remote tribes is frequently most elaborate. The woolly nature of the hair makes it difficult to manipulate, but with the aid of a stiffening of camwood, palm-oil, and clay, some astounding results are produced. Thus the women of one tribe will be found wearing the hair hanging in countless small plaits, others with plaits wound round the crown of the head and a knob at the back; but the commonest fashion is to raise the hair above the head in various patterns. Women of the Gold Coast tribes have an upright spiral column on either side of the head, resembling an antelope's horns, or a single high and massive tower of hair; some of the women wear two or three comical tufts of hair with the spaces between them carefully shaved; while the Inokuns and women of other tribes on the Cross River train the hair into a crest, a foot or more in height, falling at the back below the level of the ears in the shape of a fan, the whole structure being as hard as wood.¹ These are only a few examples, and scarcely two tribes dress the hair alike. In some parts the women pay no regard to their hair, either cropping it short or allowing it to grow at will, and where

¹ Hairpins of carved ivory, bone, or wood are stuck into the hair in nearly all cases.

this occurs the men of the tribe appear to be doubly particular about their own hair, shaving it into fantastic patterns so as to resemble a chess-board, and raising a stiffened tuft of wool from each division. Negroes seldom grow hair on the face, but occasionally the men of a tribe may be noticed wearing carefully cultivated tufts on the chin, which give them a most diabolical appearance.¹

The principal ornaments worn are rings, necklaces, bracelets or bangles, armlets and anklets, and earrings. In the vicinity of the Gold Coast these are usually of pure gold,² with necklaces of aggrary beads, but in other parts it is very exceptional to find ornaments of either gold or silver, though, here and there, trading women are met with wearing English silver coins set as rings. Coral necklaces are much affected by the wealthier chiefs, and such men as Nana, on state occasions, often wear three or four hundred pounds worth of coral round their necks.³ Beads of European manufacture are much in request for necklaces, and the different kinds are carefully classified according to shape, colour,⁴ and size by the natives. Barth tells us that he collected the native names for over thirty varieties, and this probably does not represent one-fourth of the number, for the great traveller's observations were confined to the Soudan. Cowries sometimes take the place of beads for ornamentation, being strung together or sewn on to cloth, and in the Oil Rivers unmarried girls wear nothing but a single string of cowries round the hips. For earrings long cylindrical beads of opal and cornelian are popular among the women of many tribes; bracelets of iron,

¹ Mohammedan men shave the head and grow scanty beards. Nigerian Fulah women usually wear their hair in plaits, while Nupé and Hausa women affect a large helmet-shaped arrangement. Mandingos and Western Fulahs of both sexes wear long hanging plaits.

² See Chapters IV. and V.

³ All purchased from European traders.

⁴ The colour denotes the wearer's particular deity.

ivory, copper, brass, or glass ;¹ armlets (worn above the elbow) of the same materials—more usually seen on the men than on the women ; and, in the matter of anklets, we may mention three curious varieties worn by the women of different tribes of the Niger Delta. The wealthier of the trading women wear massive anklets² of ivory, formed from a hollowed tusk, through which the foot has to be passed before it has stopped growing. The weight of the ivory is, of course, very considerable, but it is nothing in comparison with the weight of the anklets worn by the girls and women of the Anambara country ; those of the former consist of brass rods³ formed into a huge spiral spring from ankle to knee ; while those of the latter are even more cumbersome, being cymbal-like plates of brass, often more than a foot in diameter. These are welded round the woman's ankles on her marriage, and are never removed, causing her to walk with a most awkward gait, and allowing her but little comfort in life. Necklaces, bracelets, anklets, and other ornaments, however, are not worn entirely for the purpose of beautifying the person, but usually as a charm against one or other of the various evil spirits which infest the land,⁴ and on occasions of religious festivals the adornments are largely increased, the hair and skin being dyed and stained in different colours.

Tattooing the face, shoulders and arms, is also a common method of ornamentation,⁵ and by a peculiar process the

¹ The Nupés are experts in fusing glass, and make bangles out of old bottles.

² Often six or eight inches deep.

³ Brass rods (resembling stair-rods) are an article of import, and have for many years been a currency in the country, about one hundred and twenty rods being valued at 30s.

⁴ *Vide* Chapter XX.

⁵ There is no attempt at pictorial effect, such as is found in Japan or Burmah.

flesh is raised in regular patterns, looking at a little distance not unlike crochet-work. In addition to this, there is the distinctive tribal marking,¹ consisting of a certain number and form of gashes generally on the face, by which anyone with a knowledge of the matter can tell at a glance to what tribe a man belongs. This marking is done in youth, and the operation must be most painful, since the cuts are deep, and into them is rubbed some colouring matter, to render them permanent. A complete list of the tribal markings would be of considerable interest, but so far little attention has been paid to the subject, and photography fails to reproduce the different lines with accuracy.² This is the more to be regretted, because the custom will probably die out as the tribes become civilized.

That the negro does not overwork himself is, perhaps, true, yet he has to work hard enough to earn a living; to sow and gather in his crops; to obtain food by fishing or hunting; to weave or work in metals; or to collect the natural products of the country for barter to the European merchants. On the women falls the heaviest share of the daily work; their duties are to prepare the food of the household, to look after the hut, to do all the marketing and carry the produce to the factories, while they may be seen (with their babies slung on their backs) toiling in the fields or paddling canoes on the rivers from sunrise to sunset. The wonderful fertility of the soil makes agriculture easy, and so plentiful are the crops that it is doubtful if any part of West Africa has ever known a famine, or even a scarcity of food supply. The family system has been previously referred to, and to such an extent

¹ Mohammedans have a great horror of this practice, which they call *shusua*.

² A survival of this practice is to be found in India, where the painted caste-marks are possibly merely a substitute for the tribal cuts.

is this carried that a village or community amounts to a small co-operative society. The individual is sunk in the family, village, or tribe ; and among most tribes the land is held by families in common. On the death of the head of the family, the children inherit in equal shares, and should one of them desire to alienate his portion, he can only do so to a member of his own tribe ; while, in the event of there being no children to inherit, the property passes to the community. Throughout the greater part of the Gold Coast Colony succession is through the female, e.g. when a man dies his children do not succeed, but the property is taken by the children of his sister. A chief explains the reason thus : “ My sister’s children are my blood relations, but whether the children my wives bear are so or not I cannot tell.”¹

These native laws are interesting as showing the stage of civilization at which the various tribes have arrived, and, although such matters as ceremonials at births, marriages and deaths are more intimately associated with religion than with anything else, it will not, perhaps, be out of place to describe them here. With regard to the ceremonies attending the birth of an infant, among most of the tribes it is customary to call in the priest some time before the child is born, so that the woman may be adorned with anklets, bracelets, and necklaces of sacred beads, as charms against evil spirits. Charms, also, are fastened to the child immediately it comes into the world, and a name is conferred on it ; among Gold Coast tribes this name is that of the day of the week on which it was born, but in other parts the name is generally that of the particular deity worshipped by the child’s parents. This is only the first name, and a second is given later, when a cleansing corresponding to our baptism takes place. “ The water which is always in the earthen vessels placed before the images of the gods, is brought to

¹ *Edinburgh Juridical Review*, July, 1889.

the house and thrown up on the thatched roof, and as it drips down from the eaves the mother and child pass three times through the falling drops. The priest next makes a water of purification with which he bathes the child's head; he repeats three times the name by which the infant is to be known, and then holds him in his arms so that his feet touch the ground. After these ceremonies have been duly performed the fire is extinguished, and the embers carried away; the house is then carefully swept out, live coals are brought, and a fresh fire lighted. We thus appear to have a combination of a purification by water and a purification by fire."¹ On the Gold Coast the baptism is slightly varied, everything being done by the father, who, filling his mouth with rum, squirts it into the child's face on naming it, and afterwards pours out a libation of rum to the gods of his ancestors. Certain births are considered unlucky; in the Niger Delta, for instance, a woman who bears twins is proclaimed an out-cast, and her offspring destroyed. Children who cut their upper teeth first are also supposed to be under evil influence, and are made away with. The child of a mother dying in giving it birth is buried alive—as is, in Ahanta, the tenth child born of the same mother. But these superstitions are not universal in West Africa, for, in some districts, twins are considered the greatest good luck; and whereas some tribes offer up albino babies as a sacrifice to their gods, others reverence them.²

Marriage is a rite held in high esteem by all the pagan tribes, and though, where the priesthood is all-powerful, the ceremonies are more or less of a religious nature, originally it was a purely social institution. The actual ceremonies differ somewhat among the various tribes; but there are always the proposal, the betrothal, and the marriage festivities, in some

¹ *Ellis*.

² All these inhuman practices are gradually being swept away.

form or other. When an unbetrothed girl arrives at the age of puberty, she advertises the fact by decking herself out in her best clothes and ornaments, and parading the town or village, accompanied by a bevy of girls. This usually produces a suitor, who makes his offer of marriage to the girl's parents by means of one of his friends. The price to be paid for the girl is arranged on business lines, and when this matter has been satisfactorily settled, a betrothal of long or short duration takes place, during which time the intended bride is carefully fattened up by her relatives.¹ As the wedding-day approaches the bridegroom prepares the feast, sending presents of tobacco and intoxicating liquor to all the bride's relations and friends, bidding them to the feast. At the appointed hour the bride is escorted to the house of the bridegroom, where she is formally handed over by her parents, after which, feasting, dancing, and revelry are kept up for a considerable length of time. Sometimes betrothals take place at a very early age, and the bridegroom has to wait several years for his bride, but, in this case, all payments are made on the engagement taking place, and when the girl becomes marriageable, she is conducted to her future husband's house without further ceremony.

Anything like love,² as we understand the term, is altogether unknown to the African; women are regarded as property, and the more wives a man is able to possess, the greater his importance in the eyes of his friends. Modesty and chastity are qualities which have small place in African life, though infidelity on the part of a wife is subject to the

¹ The negro estimates a woman's beauty by her corpulence and the glossy blackness of her skin.

² "Lovers never kiss one another, nor do mothers kiss their babes, for the practice is to them quite unmeaning. The people of the sea-coast towns have invented a verb to describe the process (which they have heard of from Europeans), viz. *feufahnu*, which means, literally, 'to suck mouth.'"—*Ellis*.

most rigid laws. Adultery is punishable almost at the will of the injured husband, who can demand compensation from the paramour, sell him into slavery, or even slay him; while the penalties imposed on the guilty wife extend from simple divorce to death. Polygamy is universal, the first wife being the mistress of the household, and, curiously enough, the wives encourage their husband to take more wives, and even concubines. There is no question of jealousy, as each wife has her separate hut in the compound, and the greater number of wives a man has the easier their lives, for the position of wife is no better than that of servant or labourer, each one having her apportioned daily work, be it in the household, the field, or the market. To show what a low state of morality really exists, even among the semi-civilized tribes, we may mention that it is considered no disgrace for a man to lend one of his wives to another man, or for a wife to be so lent; while trading on the intrigues of a wife is by no means an unpopular method of enrichment.¹

Burials are attended throughout West African pagandom with immense ceremony, the death of a chief or other individual of rank being the occasion for the wildest debauchery; and, beyond the limits of British authority, many barbarous rites are practised. Let us first describe what occurs in British colonies like the Gold Coast, where such things as human sacrifices have long since been put down. As death draws nigh, the members of the family assemble round the dying man to hear his last wishes as to the disposal of his property, and, as soon as he is dead, wild lamentations burst from the women, who rush forth from the house, proclaiming the news with wails and shrieks. The corpse is then dressed in the deceased's best clothes and ornaments, and propped up to receive the mourners, who offer it meat and drink. Each party of mourners, as it

¹ *Vide* p. 67.

arrives in front of the house, fires a salute of musketry amidst beating of drums and loud expressions of grief, presents of various kinds being given by the mourners to the dead man's relatives. A general fast is proclaimed from the moment of death until the body is interred (usually two or three days), but this does not include abstention from liquor, so that by the time the actual burial takes place, everyone is in an advanced state of intoxication. The native custom is to bury a man under the floor of his house, but this is forbidden (for sanitary reasons) in the coast towns, and the grave is consequently prepared outside. Superstition does not permit of the corpse being carried through a door, and a hole for its egress has to be made in the wall. In the coffin with the body are placed many valuable ornaments, clothes, food, tobacco, rum, &c., to accompany the deceased to the other world, for the idea is held that all these articles have spirits capable of following the spirit of the man into the unknown.¹ For a similar purpose, sacrifices of sheep, goats and fowls are made at the grave-side, and the interment is announced by salvoes of musketry. Gin and rum are freely distributed, and drinking and feasting are indulged in for a length of time depending on the importance of the deceased. Neither is this the end of all things, for periodical celebrations of the burial, with attendant debauches, are customary, and portions of food and drink are daily placed by the side of the tomb.² The position in which the corpse is laid in its last resting-place varies considerably, some tribes burying the body upright,³ some sitting, others lying on its side.

The funeral rites among those pagan tribes who dwell at a

¹ *Vide* Chapter XX.

² Some sort of shed is generally erected over the tomb. The Ibibios (Cross River) build two small mud chambers by the side of the tomb, for the use of the spirit of the deceased.

³ The Limbas (Sierra Leone) bury their dead upright.

safe distance from the British official are replete with enormities—including cannibalism and human sacrifices. Such things still go on *sub rosâ* within the British sphere of influence, but when detected and brought to book, all who have connived at them suffer the extreme penalty as murderers. Prior to our administration of the country, the burial of no pagan chief was considered to be sufficiently celebrated, unless a certain number of his wives and slaves were buried with him, in order that he might enter on his new life accompanied by attendants befitting his rank. This cannot be compared with the *suttee*, or self-immolation of the Hindu widow, as neither the widows nor the slaves of the African chief desire to offer themselves as sacrifices. On the contrary, no sooner is the death of a chief known than all his wives and slaves immediately attempt to effect their escape, to frustrate which the death is concealed until the requisite number of victims have been secured. The sacrifice of human beings is in itself horrible enough, but it becomes doubly horrible when we know with what revolting cruelties it is accompanied, and it seems almost impossible to conceive that any people can be so degraded as to permit such atrocities to take place. Yet there are, even now, within a day's journey of a British court-house, places in West Africa, where on the death of a chief, scores of innocent men and women are cast alive into the grave, their legs and arms being broken to prevent escape; where victims are brought forth and slain, and then eaten by the mourners; and where the sacrifice of virgins is considered as the highest honour to the dead. Ellis¹ maintains that these human sacrifices are not due to any inherent bloodthirstiness, but to an exaggerated regard for the dead. "Even years after a man's death, slaves and captives are sometimes sacrificed to his memory, in the

¹ *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast.*

belief that their ghosts will swell the throng of his attendants."

But it is not only at funerals that human sacrifices take place, for among the more priest-ridden tribes, periodical sacrifices are offered to the gods, for the purpose of staying or averting some great calamity.¹ Albino children and young girls are offered as sacrifices to sharks, or prior to a great palaver; slaves are slaughtered at the new moon, and at all religious festivals; while the murders committed at the instigation of the priests, for the glorification of themselves and their gods, are of the most wanton description. In this respect the great offenders are the numerous secret societies which exist everywhere in West Africa, their members being sworn to kill a certain number of human beings at stated times. In the hinterland of Sierra Leone we find the authorities constantly engaged in capturing the perpetrators of murders; here, the secret societies—*Porrah* and others—are the dread of the whole country, their members ruling everything, even the kings or chiefs, and anyone interfering with them is secretly made away with.² The members of the *Porrah* hold their meetings at night in the bush; sentries are posted all round the spot, and anyone approaching, without giving the sign, is immediately slain. The more general method of committing their murders is in the guise of a wild beast; thus, men clothed in a leopard's skin with iron claws, or in a crocodile's hide,³ will pounce out on the unsuspecting wayfarer, and tear him or her to pieces, carrying off the body to be eaten by the members of the society. The origin of these societies is not known, though they are acknowledged to be very ancient, and to have thousands of devotees, who,

¹ *Vide* page 302.

² In the immediate neighbourhood of Freetown this state of affairs has now been put an end to.

³ Known as "human leopards," and "human crocodiles."

on entering the society, have to undergo an initiation accompanied by peculiar ceremonies and mystic rites. Whether the Sierra Leone societies are of a religious character or not is sometimes doubted, though it is generally supposed that the murders are committed in order to appease the god of evil, and the great Egbo of the Oil Rivers is certainly a religious institution.¹ On the Gold Coast, however, there exists a society (composed principally of Fantis and Ashantis) known as the Anti-European League, whose name discloses sufficiently its objects, and with which religion is not in any way associated.

Persons entering all these secret societies bind themselves with the most sacred oaths, and here (as elsewhere in Africa) the oath of allegiance or friendship is taken before several witnesses in a prescribed form. In some districts the principal ceremony is the washing of each other's feet. Among the tribes inland from Opobo, a goat is brought out before the two parties, its head is struck off at one blow, and the blood smeared with the fingers over the forehead and breast of all present, after which pieces of raw flesh are crammed by one party into the mouths of the other. Captain Roupell gives the following account² of the ceremony of "blood brotherhood" as performed in the country of the Upper Cross River:—"The chopping of *imbiam* or doctor is the native form of oath, the ceremony of which is as follows: four, six, or eight young men from each tribe being selected, sit down facing each other; one man from each tribe rises and clasps the other's right hand, fingers interlacing; a mutual friend then lances the wrist of each until the blood flows freely; a grain of Indian corn, one of Guinea corn, and a piece of kola-nut are brought and rubbed in the blood of each; this being done, the two men each eat the corn and nut and blood off the

¹ *Vide* Chapter XX.

² *Foreign Office, 1897, Annual Series. Africa, No. 1834.*

other's wrist. They then repeat an oath to the effect that he who harms or takes gun against his brother—which the other man now considers himself to be—may be killed by the forest-god if he goes into the forest; if he go by water, may he die by water; if he take fire to cook, may the fire kill him, and so forth. They then hug each other and are placed back to back, when the native administering the oath separates them by dropping some earth between them. Palm wine being then produced, they sip alternately from the same glass. This form of oath is considered so binding that the bad characters are among those selected to partake of it, being those most likely to bring trouble on the rest of the tribe. It is supposed to be binding as long as the actual parties to whom it is administered live." It is also the custom in most of the coast regions to take a religious oath, a particular god being named; in this case a small portion of water, earth, &c., from the spot where the god is supposed to reside is swallowed by the person taking the oath.

While on this subject we may mention one or two methods of administering oaths to natives in British Courts of Justice. Banbury thus translates the Timani oath:—

Of a truth, truth, truth Pah Medicine,
 I, I, of a truth,
 The words I am going to talk,
 If I talk or answer lies!
 If you leave me,
 You leave your fowl.
 If I go in a canoe, let it sink,
 And let alligator catch me;
 If I go into the bush,
 Let big snake bite me;
 If I climb a tree for palm-oil or palm-wine,
 Let me fall down;
 If I eat rice cooked in a pot
 After talking lies in this case.

Or if I eat cassada,
 Let my belly swell and let me die,
 But if I speak the truth,
 Let me be free from these curses,
Amen.

The Mendi oath is somewhat similar, and in both cases the witness knocks two pieces of iron together before swearing:—

O god! come down; thou givest me fowl.
 In this case I come as a witness, and I will speak,
 If I tell lies, I go in the bush and serpent bite me;
 If I go in a canoe, the canoe will sink and I drown;
 If I climb a palm-tree, I must fall and die.
 You (god) let the thunder fall and kill me.
 If I talk the truth, then I am safe in thee.

The Kruboy is sworn thus:—some salt is placed in the palm of his hand, and the person administering the oath takes the witness' hand and says:—

This salt that you are going to take.
 The words you are going to talk,
 Are in the fear of God!
 If you talk lies,
 This salt will cut your belly.

The witness then swallows the salt.¹

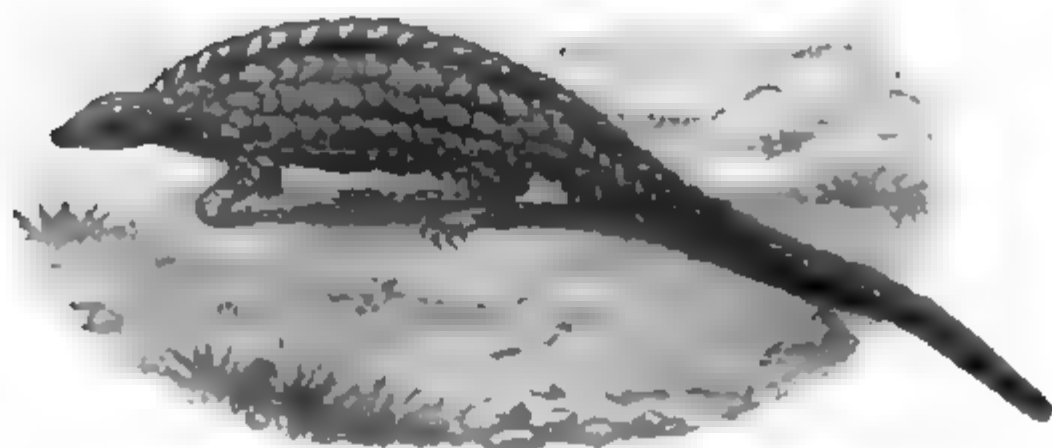
In the Oil Rivers there are various methods of administering the oath to a witness. A Jakri man swears on a bundle of sticks; but the more important chiefs of the rivers further east, when desirous of giving evidence, go through a most solemn and lengthy operation. An officer of the court has to accompany the chief to his house, where the juju-man and all the slaves of the household are assembled round the tomb of the father of the witness, who proceeds to "swear juju." Prayers are repeated in a loud voice, offerings are made, and

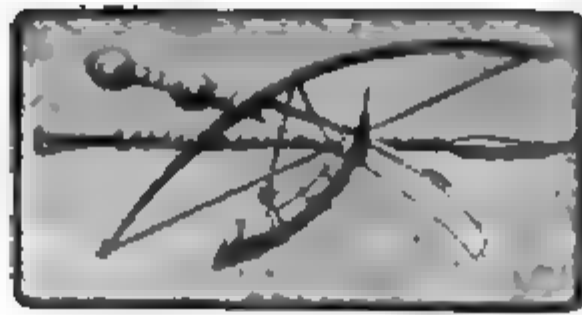
¹ It should be observed that in these pagan oaths the punishment dreaded for perjury is altogether of a temporal nature, no mention being made of future condemnation. See Chapter XX.

at intervals the chief perambulates the tomb, banging his "boys" about with a pestle-like weapon with which he is armed. Eventually he turns to the official, and signifies that the oath has been taken, in the simple words, "Done swear him!"¹

Similar forms of oath are employed in native courts of law, though the remote tribes still adopt ordeal to settle everything. A poisonous decoction of sass-wood, Calabar bean, or other ingredient is prepared, and the accused is called upon to partake of the bowl to prove his innocence. It is, perhaps, needless to say that the guilt or innocence of the party depends entirely on the strength of the poison, and on the goodwill or otherwise of the individual who prepares it. Trial by ordeal is, of course, forbidden by the British authorities, and, considering everything, the native laws (when supervised by our officials) are as just as can be expected. But in a land where a vicious priesthood is all-powerful, and where superstition is rife, it is impossible that what we consider justice can exist.

¹ Mohammedans of most parts swear on the Koran, though some (e.g. from Lagos) kiss the blade of a sword held across the face.





CHAPTER XVIII.

SAMORY AND RABEH.

*These two
chiefs
are
the
co-
leaders*

DURING the past few years, at varied intervals, startling news has reached Europe of warlike operations carried on in the Western and Central Soudan by two powerful Mohammedan chiefs known respectively as Samory and Rabeh. These "Black Napoleons," as they have been styled, commencing their conquests about the same time at points, roughly speaking, some 2500 miles apart, have worked gradually, one from the westward, the other from the eastward, until at the present time they are separated by barely eight hundred miles of country. Were they to form an alliance and join forces, they would probably carry with them the whole Mohammedan population of the countries lying between Senegal and Darfur; but such an event is hardly possible, Africans of their calibre being too jealous of each other to join hands even for the expulsion of the "white infidel."

Both these remarkable men have risen from comparative obscurity to become the commanders of powerful armies; each of them is likely to prove in the near future sufficiently troublesome to keep not only ourselves, but also the French and Germans well employed. So far, only Samory has crossed swords with Europeans, though Rabeh has already reached a spot within measurable distance of British, French, and German spheres of influence.

Samory¹—the western conqueror—is a native of Segou, the province in which Mungo Park spent many a weary month, and he was born, some fifty or sixty years ago, of humble Malinka or Soninka parents.² His early life resembles that of the great Fulah Dan Fodio—zeal for the Mohammedan faith overcoming all else, and gaining for him a following of devoted Muslims, whose sole object became the conquest and conversion of the pagans. Step by step he subdued most of the tribes on both banks of the Upper Niger, until, fifteen years ago, his kingdom rivalled in importance and extent that of his eastern neighbours, the Fulahs, stretching as it did from the Kong Mountains, across the Niger, almost as far as Senegal. For some years he restricted his operations to the conquest of the native tribes of the interior, but when the French advance from Senegal approached the confines of the empire he had carved out for himself, his frequent successes against the aborigines made him bold, and he commenced raiding into territory which had passed under the protection of France.

In 1881, Samory's headquarters were at Bissandugu, the capital of Ouassoulou, situated about four hundred miles north-east of Sierra Leone (Freetown), and the French (under Colonel Borgnis-Desbordes and Captain Galliéni) having established a military post at Bamaku on the Niger, and having made a treaty of peace with Ahmadu, Sultan of Segou, sent an envoy to treat with Samory. The Almami, however, refused to have anything to do with the French, and

¹ We have adhered to the name by which the French call him, and which has become accepted in England. His correct name and title is, however, said to be "Samodu, Almami of Ouassoulou," which is sometimes erroneously written "Ahmay Samadoo." Another of his titles is Edziman, i.e. Lord Paramount.

² Some accounts say that, in his youth, he was captured in war, and became a slave in the household of the powerful chief, Fodi Mussa.



A MOHA MEDIAN WARRIOR.

[To face page 343.]

threatened the envoy with death. Colonel Borgnis-Desbordes consequently declared war, and, in February, 1882, gained a victory over Samory's troops at Keéniera, after which little was heard of them until April, 1883, when they were defeated again at Oueyako. In 1885, Commandant Combes utterly routed the Sofa army at Kokoro, and in the following year Lieutenant-Colonel Frey engaged the enemy at Fatako-Djingo, and so crippled them that Samory sued for peace. By the treaty concluded in 1886, Samory agreed to restrict his operations to the countries on the right bank of the Upper Niger; and thus, for the time being, matters were amicably settled. The French envoy who visited Samory to arrange the terms of the treaty was considerably astonished and impressed by what he saw; the great warrior was a magnificent man, well over six feet in height and proportionately broad, and living in a style superior in every way to that of most West African potentates. His troops were well-disciplined, and armed with modern rifles; his camp was provided with every luxury, and his "chiefs wore silver helmets, and a silver battle-axe hung at every saddle-bow."

This treaty with the French¹ now gave Samory time to recruit his army, and within a few months he had embarked on various raiding expeditions to the south and east, his object being to capture slaves to attend to the wants of his fighting force. As usual, he was completely successful in his operations against the pagan tribes, and among the more important of his conquests may be mentioned Kenedugu, the capital of which (Sikasso) cost him a long siege and

¹ For a detailed account of the French operations in these regions, from 1881 to 1894, vide *Le Soudan Français, and Recent French Operations on the Upper Niger*, by Captain Pasfield Oliver, late R.A., *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, vol. xxxviii., p. 943 (1894).

many a hard fight before it succumbed to his superior numbers. It was while engaged in this siege that Samory was visited by Captain Binger, who had taken the opportunity of the peace of 1886-8 to travel through some of the countries of the Niger bend. In the meanwhile the Almami had not lost sight of the French, and, by 1888, he had formed an alliance with the Sultan of Segou and other chiefs for the purpose of resisting the invasion of the white man. The French (under Colonel Archinard) now decided to break up this alliance; the Sultan of Segou was attacked, and, after a certain amount of resistance, was subdued; then attention was turned to the old enemy, Samory. At first it was thought advisable to come to terms with him, and, in February, 1889, Captain Bonnardot concluded a satisfactory treaty at Niako, by which Samory pledged himself to keep on the right bank of the Niger. Three months later, however, he repudiated the treaty, and prepared for war. Nothing was done until 1891, when Colonel Archinard opened the campaign by advancing rapidly on Samory. Fierce fighting ensued, and having captured Tutu-Keru and 70,000 rounds of modern rifle ammunition, the French took the town of Bissandugu, Samory's capital, and drove the enemy eastward, though without in any way crushing the power of the great chief. The war was continued in 1892 by Colonel Humbert, and in 1893 by Colonel Combes, at whose hands Samory and his Sofa warriors suffered severe defeats.¹ At the end of the latter year Samory was reported to be hard at work raiding and destroying pagan villages in the great bend of the Niger, and Colonel Bonnier, hearing of this, made a rapid descent on the Sofas. The little French force soon fell in with the enemy in the act of carrying off into slavery the wretched

¹ Colonel Combes became a perfect terror to the Sofas, by whom he was known as "Coumbo, the All-Conquering."

inhabitants of Ténétou, which town they had just captured, but Samory by some means had been apprised of the threatened attack, and beat a hasty retreat, shooting down any slaves unable to keep pace with his column. Bonnier pursued in the hope of taking Samory prisoner, but was doomed to disappointment, as, although he completely routed the Sofas, their leader escaped from the battle-field on horseback.

The French now unfortunately gave Samory sufficient breathing time to collect his scattered forces, and to once more commence his predatory operations with renewed vigour. He had shifted his ground, however, for, early in 1894, we hear of him in the hinterland of Sierra Leone, when, in attempting to escape from the French, he fell foul of a British expedition. Closely hemmed in between the forces of the two European powers, the Sofa chief began to think that matters were hopeless, but fortune again favoured him, and, owing to the lamentable incident at Waima, or Warina, to which we have referred in an earlier chapter,¹ Samory slipped from the grasp of his would-be captors. The British force followed him up, only, however, with the usual result—the rout of the Sofa army and the escape of the chief. Since that time, until quite recently, Samory has contrived to steer clear of both British and French, and he has been left alone, though it is unlikely that he has been idle in the matter of recruiting, and in all probability he now has, at his headquarters at Bontuku, a very powerful following. Just before the last Ashanti campaign,² he was known to be on the northern borders of that kingdom, and Prempeh is said to have sought his assistance. This was refused, doubtless because the ruler of Ashanti was a pagan, but it was imagined that, from his standing aloof, Samory bore no ill-

¹ *Vide* page 45.

² 1896. *Vide* page 102.

will towards the British, and this belief was fostered by the French, who maintained that the rifles which he possessed were supplied to him by English traders. This charge proved groundless, as all the weapons captured at different times of late years from the Sofas have been of either French or German manufacture. Whether Samory desires the friendship of Great Britain or not is very doubtful; the chief himself, from all accounts, is strongly inclined to be friendly to all Europeans, acknowledging that they are his superiors,¹ but, at the same time, he has very little hold over his Sofas, who are always ready to attack anyone whom they may consider worth plundering.

It was probably this fact which accounted for the attack on the British Mission under Lieutenant Henderson, late R.N., in the spring of 1897, for there is nothing to show that Samory instigated the attack. The Mission left Accra on the 20th November, 1896, and consisted of Lieutenant Henderson (Travelling Commissioner), Assistant-Inspector Irvine (Gold Coast Constabulary), Dr. Part, and 100 Hausas. The object of the Mission was to visit the chiefs of the hinterland north of Ashanti, with whom treaties had been concluded, and on approaching Bona, Lieutenant Henderson was informed that that place had recently been captured and destroyed by Samory's Sofas. The town of Buali was found to be occupied by 2000 or 3000 Sofas, who, however, evacuated it on the appearance of the British force, and here the Mission remained until the beginning of January, 1897, endeavouring to open up negotiations with Samory's son, who was in command of the Sofas at Bona. Lieutenant Henderson next advanced to Wa, which was also in the possession of Samory's troops, entered it without opposition

¹ A native trader who visited Samory in 1896 describes a banner which he possesses whereon was emblazoned in Arabic, "Samory, fearless of all except the white man and God."

and hoisted the British flag. At Wa a small mud fort was built, and at the end of February, leaving a garrison of about fifty Hausas under Mr. Irvine and Dr. Part, Lieutenant Henderson, with the remainder of the force, and Mr. Ferguson (a coloured interpreter and surveyor), set out for Dawkita, in the direction of Bona. Messages were now sent to Samory's son, warning him that, if he continued raiding the pagans, his actions would be regarded as hostile. A courteous reply was returned in which the Sofa commander stated that he had no desire to quarrel with Europeans, but that his army required food, and he proposed capturing Dawkita immediately; if therefore the British wished to be killed they had better remain there, otherwise it would be well if they retired across the Volta. Lieutenant Henderson at once prepared for a fight, and, within a few hours, 8000 Sofas surrounded the place, and for two days and nights kept up a fierce fire on the garrison. On the third day the firing suddenly ceased, and a messenger arrived from Samory's son, saying that he did not wish to kill the British, whom he therefore requested to withdraw quietly. The answer sent back was to the effect that the British had no intention of abandoning the place. The firing was then resumed, and on the fourth day the friendly natives of the town, finding that the water supply was giving out, surrendered to the enemy. Soon after this the Sofas contrived to capture a portion of the town, and the British position was thereby rendered almost untenable, a fact which induced Lieutenant Henderson to attempt to cut his way through to Wa. Mr. Ferguson and five of the garrison had meanwhile been wounded, and two had been killed; the difficulty therefore was the conveyance of the wounded, but the temporary cessation of hostilities at sunset gave the British force the opportunity of issuing out. A hollow square was formed, and, with the wounded in the centre, a rapid advance was made through

the enemy's lines, all going well until the Sofas suddenly discovered what was taking place, when they opened fire on the party from all sides. The British replied by firing a couple of volleys to clear the path immediately in their front, and, under cover of darkness, got away without further trouble.

On the following day (April 3rd) the little force arrived at Wa, having met on the way reinforcements which had been sent up from Kumassi, consisting of fifty Hausas and Captain Cramer with two 7-pounders and two rocket troughs. Wa was almost immediately surrounded by the Sofas, and Lieutenant Henderson, seeing that it would be almost hopeless to try and hold out against the overwhelming strength of the enemy, decided to make his way to the Sofa camp and endeavour to arrange an armistice. Leaving instructions with his officers that, if he did not return, they were to evacuate the fort and retire without him, he started, in company with two native interpreters, for the headquarters of the Sofa army. He was received by Samory's son with courtesy, but the latter refused to treat except on the condition that the British surrendered. 'These terms Lieutenant Henderson would not agree to, and, though he was himself detained as a prisoner of war, he was allowed to send a note to his officers, acquainting them with the result of the palaver, and Wa was evacuated during the night.' The Englishman's pluck in coming to the Sofa camp alone was much admired, and a council of war (held the next morning) decided that he should be treated with all honour, and, after visiting Samory, should be sent back to the coast. Under a strong escort, Lieutenant Henderson was taken to Samory's headquarters at Haramakoro, in the Jimini country, where

¹ In the retreat from Wa, Mr. Ferguson was unfortunately abandoned by his carriers, and, being captured by the enemy, was immediately shot and decapitated.

he arrived on the 29th April. With the great Mohammedan chief he remained until the 4th May, during which time he was treated as a guest, shown a review of the troops, a cartridge factory, and an ammunition store, and then despatched on his journey to the coast with a present of a pair of gold anklets from Samory to the Governor of the Gold Coast.

From the neighbourhood of Bona the Sofas apparently spread westwards into the French hinterland of the Ivory Coast, for, on the 20th August, 1897, they were encountered by a French detachment on the right bank of the Volta, when a desperate fight ensued. The French force consisted of 100 sharpshooters, and, being outnumbered by the enemy, they were eventually dispersed with a loss of two officers and forty men.

Samory himself may be "an enlightened and a noble savage," he may be anxious, as we are told, to be friendly to the British, but it is not probable that one European Power will support a robber chief against the others. Samory¹ has lived a hard life, and it may be that he would now be well content to settle down in peace upon a pension. But how would that ensure peace to West Africa? His place would be taken by one or other of his sons, in whom his people have every confidence; and there is no denying that the Sofas mean resisting to the bitter end, knowing, as they do, that defeat at the hands of Europeans implies for them practical extinction, and having, as they have, sufficient fanaticism not to fear death. From the latest accounts, Samory and his chiefs, through their frequent campaigns against the French, have learned something of European tactics, and have trained their men accordingly. Moreover, his troops are fairly well supplied with modern fire-arms, such as rifles and revolvers, and he possesses factories where

¹ Samory's death was reported in June, 1897, but similar reports have frequently reached Europe.

these, as well as ammunition, are manufactured. His cavalry, also, though probably somewhat rough, numbers several thousand, and, altogether, the force which he would be able to put into the field would be a formidable one.¹ It will thus be seen that a war with Samory would be no light undertaking; but, without wishing in any way to despise the enemy, we are bold enough to assert that it could have but one end—the dispersal for ever of the Sofa raiders. How soon this struggle may come we cannot say, but come it must at no very distant date; for, whatever may be Samory's ideas of the advantages of keeping on good terms with Europeans, the fact remains that there is no room for him and his slave-raiding Sofas in West Africa, consequently the removal of these pests of the Soudan is merely a matter of time. When they will be removed and the manner of their removal are among the many West African problems awaiting solution.

Rabeh, the eastern warrior, has spent no less an eventful and exciting life, though his movements have not been chronicled with such regularity as those of Samory. Still, in some respects, he is the more remarkable of the two, and to anyone acquainted with the history of the Eastern (or Egyptian) Soudan, Rabeh's achievements will be doubly interesting, since he forms a species of connecting link between the east and the west of Central Africa. The first rumours of his advance westward from Darfur induced the belief that the Mahdi's forces, finding themselves no longer able to withstand the Egyptians, were evacuating the Nile provinces and immigrating into Central Africa; but this idea has now been dispelled, for, as our account of Rabeh's progress will show, the invasion of the west from the east is not in

¹ If a comparison can be made between Africans and Asiatics, then Samory's troops may be likened, in the matter of organization and equipment, to the forces of the Ameer of Afghanistan.

any way connected with the Egyptian advance on Khartoum. To understand it aright, it is necessary to recall certain events which took place, a quarter of a century ago, in the outlying Egyptian provinces—when they were still unconquered by Mahomed Ahmed, the Mahdi. In those days the name of Zubeir was famous in the land. A member of the Jaalin tribe,¹ Zubeir spent his youth in Khartoum, whence he eventually wandered up the Nile to the Bahr el Ghazel. He was a born leader of men, and destined to play a most extraordinary part in the history of the country of his adoption, for, within a few years of his arrival in the Bahr el Ghazel, he had become a noted dealer in slaves and ivory—goods which in those days were easily picked up. With a small band of devoted followers, all greedy for gain, he raided far and wide, until eventually he found himself the virtual ruler of the northern districts of the Bahr el Ghazel, which, from time immemorial, had paid tribute to the Sultan of Darfur. Up to this time Zubeir had been more or less disregarded by the Egyptian Government, who looked upon him merely as one of the numerous free-lances carrying on a trade which was then considered neither illegal nor immoral. Now, however, that his power was becoming felt in Darfur, the Government at Khartoum, instigated by the Darfurians, sent a small body of troops to check his progress. Zubeir succeeded in routing this force, but so represented matters to the Government, that he was not only pardoned, but was appointed Governor of the Egyptian province of Bahr el Ghazel. In 1873 he persuaded the authorities to allow him to make war on Darfur, which, in a remarkably short space of time, he succeeded in conquering and annexing to Egypt.

¹ “The Jaalin are almost the only Arabs in the Sudan who maintain a well-regulated family life, and hold morality in high esteem as a necessary condition for a healthy and contented existence.”—*Fire and Sword in the Sudan*.

He was promoted Pasha, but falling out with Ismail Pasha Ayub, Governor-General of the Soudan (who was succeeded in his appointment by Gordon), the two proceeded to Cairo to lay their grievances before the Khedive. With Zubeir we need not further concern ourselves. Suffice it to say that the Soudan knew him no more, although one of Gordon's last requests, when shut up in Khartoum in 1885, was that Zubeir might be sent to assist him, for Zubeir, Gordon believed, was the only man who had influence sufficient to stem the tide in the Soudan.

This brief account of Zubeir will give the reader some idea of the nature of the man under whom Rabeh, his slave, served his apprenticeship in the art of war. Rabeh, on his master's departure for Cairo, had accompanied Suleiman, Zubeir's son, to Shakka, over which portion of Darfur Suleiman had been appointed ruler. Gordon eventually removed Suleiman from Darfur on suspicion of disloyalty, but afterwards reinstated him and appointed him Governor of the Bahr el Ghazel. Soon after this, Suleiman, having been ill-advised, decided to raise a rebellion against the Government, and it was not until the end of 1878 that he encountered serious opposition. The suppression of the rebellion was entrusted to Romolo Gessi, an Italian, and, in May, 1879, he succeeded in engaging and scattering Suleiman's rebel force, following up his victory by pursuing the small bands which had dispersed in different directions under their several leaders. Rabeh, the ex-slave, had now become one of Suleiman's chiefs, and his band it was that Gessi, after his victory, first overtook, and routed. Rabeh escaped, and, Gessi having been called away on other business, Suleiman was, for the time being, disregarded. A few months later, however, fresh operations were commenced against him; his scattered forces had not rallied as they should have done, and eventually he was brought to bay. Gessi offered him

favourable terms, promising, on certain conditions, to spare the lives of himself and his chiefs. Suleiman now summoned his chiefs to a council of war, to discuss the situation, when, with one exception, the commanders decided for surrender. That exception was Rabeh; long and eagerly did he address the meeting, urging on his chief and his fellow-commanders that to place themselves in the hands of Gessi would mean dire ruin, not that he doubted the good faith of Gessi himself, but his fear was that the intrigues of the Danagla¹ would in the end prevail for their destruction. "He begged his companions to remember the bitter animosity which existed between the Jaalin and the Danagla, and recalled the merciless manner in which the former had treated the latter when Osman Ebtar had been defeated at Ganda. He therefore had two proposals to make, viz.:—to collect their entire force and march west into the Banda countries, which had hitherto been untouched by foreign intruders, and which could offer no resistance to the thousands of well-armed Bazingers² they still had at their command. He then went on to say that once the Black tribes had been subjugated, they could enter into relations with the kingdoms of Wadai, Baghirmi, and Bornu, and that it was most unlikely that Gessi and his men, who were tired of fighting, would follow them into distant and unknown regions, over which the Government had no control, and from which it was not likely they could reap any benefit."³

Rabeh's second proposal was that, as they were all weary of fighting, and desirous of settling down quietly in the Nile Valley, they should give Gessi the slip, proceed to a distant telegraph-station and tender their submission to the Khedive, or endeavour to reach El Obeid and seek the intercession of the Governor, who was their relative. With Gessi and his

¹ People of Dongola.

² Men armed with firearms.

³ Slatin Pasha's *Fire and Sword in the Sudan*.

followers Rabeh urged that there should be no dealings, and he moreover declared that, if all his old companions surrendered to Gessi, he himself would never do so, but would rather seek his fortune alone in the countries of the West. Gessi's envoy having addressed the meeting, the vote was taken, when Suleiman and eight of his chiefs agreed to submit, while Rabeh and five of his companions decided to march west.¹

All Rabeh's arguments had been of no avail, and, collecting his followers, he started "in a south-westerly direction to the sound of the ombeya, or elephant's tusk (the Soudan war-horn)." At his first camp he was deserted by his five fellow-chiefs,² but, nothing daunted, he pushed on, with a very considerable following of well-armed men, into the unknown land. He then appears to have made his way north, for the next that we hear of him is his encounter with the Sultan of Borku,³ whom he twice defeated. Seeing that Rabeh was too strong for him, the Sultan of Borku came to terms with his enemy, formed an alliance with him, and allowed him to settle in the southern borders of his kingdom.

It was while living in Borku that Rabeh, in 1883, received a communication from the Mahdi, calling on him to submit. His ally, the Sultan, likewise received a similar summons, but the two, well knowing that little danger could come to them at so great a distance from El Obeid, replied, in not too courteous terms, that they considered Mahomed Ahmed a rank impostor, and, therefore, had no intention of joining him. The principal reason for their refusal to acknowledge Mahomed Ahmed as the Mahdi was probably owing to the fact that the

¹ That Rabeh decided wisely was proved by later events; the Danagla prevailed with Gessi, and, on the 15th July, 1879, Suleiman and his nine chiefs were shot as rebels.

² These chiefs also were speedily captured, and shot as rebels by the Governor of El Fasher.

³ Not to be confused with Borgu on the Middle Niger.

Mohammedans of Wadai, Borku, Bornu, and the neighbouring kingdoms belong to a sect known as the Senussiye, which was founded, some sixty years ago, near Mount Senus in Algeria. Caravans from the north gradually introduced the new doctrines into Wadai, whose people, by 1876, had become most bigoted Senussiye. Now, the followers of Senussi lay claim to a Mahdi¹ of their own, who is none other than the son of the founder of the sect, and consequently a bitter hatred has sprung up between the Senussiye and the Mahdists, such as may, perhaps, be compared with the first fierce antagonism which existed between Lutherans and Roman Catholics.

From this time until quite recently little is known of the movements of Rabeh, but it is improbable that a man of his temperament would remain quiet for long, and it is more than likely that he had a hand in the conflicts which took place (after Darfur was surrendered by Slatin to the Mahdi) between Osman Adam on behalf of the Mahdi and the Senussiye on the Wadai borders of Darfur. All that we know for certain is that, from 1885 to 1889, a continuous warfare was carried on between the two parties, the miracle-working leader of the Senussiye—Abu Gemaizeh—frequently defeating Osman, only, however, to eventually die of small-pox on the eve of the rout of his force. That Rabeh has not been idle may be gathered from the reports that have come to hand of late years, for among his conquests are to be numbered the once-powerful and important Mohammedan kingdoms of Baghirmi and Bornu. Against Baghirmi he had a long-standing grievance; during his sojourn in Dar-Banda and Dar-Fertit he found that, owing to his inability to procure ammunition, his followers gradually forsook him, and, in order to obtain

¹ Mahdi signifies "the guide." To Sunni Mohammedans (Turks, Arabs, Egyptians, &c.) a Mahdi is what the Messiah is to the Jews; to the Shia Mohammedans (Persians, &c.) he is similar to our Christ, having disappeared, but certain to appear again.

this necessary, he had asked the Sultan of Baghirmi to permit him to pass peacefully through his dominions to Kuka, on Lake Chad. His request was refused, as it was imagined that he might raise a rebellion in the State, and Rabeh swore to revenge himself when opportunity should offer. The time eventually came, and Rabeh threatened Baghirmi, whose sultan now sought the assistance of Sheik Ashim of Bornu. The sheik declined to be mixed up in the quarrel, little thinking what his refusal meant, for no sooner had Rabeh subjugated Baghirmi than he directed his attentions to Bornu, utterly destroying Kuka, the capital, and driving Sheik Ashim as a fugitive to Zinder. The Sultan of Wadai had promised to assist Bornu against Rabeh, but at the last moment he withdrew his forces, probably from fear lest the eastern adventurer should turn aside and attack Wadai before Bornu.

After the conquest of Bornu, Rabeh established his capital at Dikwa, about a hundred miles south-east of Kuka, and within the German sphere (as defined by the Anglo-German agreement of the 13th November, 1893), where he has since been engaged in drilling his troops, and gradually extending his influence throughout his newly-acquired provinces. He is said to be a religious fanatic, with an unbounded hatred for Christians, though, soon after taking up his headquarters at Dikwa, he opened up communications with the Royal Niger Company, and has remained on terms of friendship with the officials. This may be partly accounted for by the fact that the son of the late king of Bornu is residing, with a considerable following, at Kano, more or less under the protection of the Company's agent; and Rabeh, knowing that the population of Bornu would prefer to see the old dynasty restored, doubtless fears the intervention of the British to bring this about.

Towards the close of 1896, Rabeh's forces made a demonstration in the direction of Kano, but on the receipt of the

news of the complete overthrow of the Fulahs outside Bida in January, 1897, and the destruction of the Nupé capital, they retired forthwith to Dikwa. With Rabeh, since his headquarters are situated within the German sphere, both Great Britain and France are, at present, precluded from making a legal treaty—even if either Power should desire to do so, and, from all accounts, Rabeh himself is by no means anxious for an alliance with Europeans; in fact, he is said to be now on his way to the Logone district for the purpose of intercepting a French expedition marching from the French Congo towards Lake Chad.

There is something of the romantic in Rabeh's wild, adventurous career, though we have been able to give but a mere outline of it. Unfortunately for himself, he, like Samory, has entered on his conquests too late, otherwise he might have founded a new empire in Central Africa. As it is, England, France, and Germany stand ready to check his progress, and to uphold the positions of the various slave-raiding and half-civilized chiefs who now rule the countries within their respective spheres of influence.





CHAPTER XIX.

SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE-TRADE.

FROM time immemorial the native of Africa has been a slave; the institution of domestic social slavery is part and parcel of the black man's life; he himself sees nothing outrageous nor even extraordinary in the mere fact of being held in bondage. The Koran expressly permits the Faithful to possess domestic slaves, and though to our notions the mere institution of slavery is abhorrent, yet in reality it compares very favourably (certainly among the African Mohammedans) with the slavery of ancient Rome or with the serfdom existing in our own country but a few centuries ago.¹ It is not, however, with this domestic servitude that we are so much concerned as with the abuses to which it has led—abuses so inhuman and atrocious as to call forth the energies of the whole civilized world for their suppression. These said abuses may be summed up under three heads: (1) the oversea slave-trade, (2) slave-raiding, and (3) human sacrifices.

With regard to the oversea slave-trade (now happily, at any rate in West Africa, a thing of the past) we propose giving merely a sketch of its origin and the means taken to abolish it. To what nation is to be attributed the inception of the idea of utilizing the natives of Africa for the purpose

¹ Hutchinson (1861), writing of the domestic slavery among the pagan tribes of the coast, says:—"Domestic slavery differs from the feudalism and vassalage of English history, chiefly in reference to the brutalities and superstitions by which it is upheld."

of developing other parts of the world is doubtful, though history records the fact that as early as 1503 negro slaves were to be found in the Portuguese and Spanish mines of South America. It is, therefore, more than probable that intercourse with Morocco had shown these two nations the value of black slave labour, and that they inaugurated the export trade, which also, we may remark in passing, Portugal was the last of European nations to abandon.¹ But even if the Portuguese and Spaniards² were the originators and inventors of this nefarious traffic, it is only fair to them to say that England and the other nations of Europe lost no time in following the example they had set. In 1562, we read, Sir John Hawkins (afterwards of Armada fame) took a cargo of slaves to the West Indies, an achievement of which he was apparently proud, since, on receiving the honour of knighthood, he adopted as his crest a "demi-Moor in his proper colour, bound with a cord." From this time the trade in slaves between Africa and America (including the West Indies) increased rapidly; sailing vessels of all nations were to be found at every port on the West African coast loading up with their human cargoes. The competition increased year by year, and it must unfortunately be acknowledged that Englishmen very shortly became the principal dealers;³ neither in those days did anyone see any inhumanity in the trade, the African being looked on as an animal, only

¹ Bryan Edwards tells us that, in 1539, there was in Lisbon a slave market, where 10,000 or 12,000 African slaves were sold annually for export to America.

² The "bull" issued by the Pope at the end of the fifteenth century gave exclusive rights in Africa to Portugal; Spain, therefore, was prohibited from trading there, and had to depend for her supply of slaves on other nations.

³ "The Company of Royal Adventurers of England trading to Africa" (chartered in 1662) contracted to supply annually 3000 slaves to the British colonies in the West Indies.

superior to a monkey in that he could be taught to work. By the end of the seventeenth century the traffic in slaves had become one of the most important industries of British vessels, and it was computed that between 1680 and 1700 no fewer than three hundred thousand slaves were shipped by Englishmen alone ; while between 1700 and 1786 upwards of six hundred thousand slaves were landed in Jamaica. So far the slave-trade was perfectly legitimate ; in fact, until 1788, England upheld it by legislature.¹ In that year, however, commenced the anti-slavery movement, headed by Clarkson and Wilberforce ; and Sir William Dolben introduced a Bill with the object of limiting the number of slaves to be carried in British ships, which had previously always been overcrowded, thereby bringing about an enormous loss of life among the unfortunate passengers. This, of course, did not check the trade in any way, and was an indirect acknowledgment by England that it was still perfectly legal. No great strides were made in its suppression for many years, though a Society was formed in London, and numerous influential philanthropists and various religious bodies interested themselves in the matter.² At length, England, who had been for two centuries or more foremost in the trade, decided on taking steps to put an end to her share of the work ; in 1805, by an Order in Council, new colonies were prohibited from partaking in the slave-trade ; in 1806, British subjects were forbidden to deal in slaves with foreign nations, and the traffic was closed to new vessels ; while, in 1807, came the crowning point, by which

¹ In 1772, Lord Chief Justice Mansfield declared slavery in *England* illegal, and that "as soon as any slave sets his foot on English ground he becomes free."

² In 1792, the King of Denmark made dealing in slaves illegal from 1802. The United States prohibited the introduction of African slaves into North America from 1804.

it became illegal for any British subject to be engaged in the slave-trade.

All this was a move in the right direction, and it was hoped that the other interested nations would follow England's example. The hope, however, was only partially realized,¹ and the immediate effect of the act was that it increased the Portuguese trade enormously, and in no way diminished the traffic. There was still as great a demand as ever for slaves in the western world, and the supply was consequently kept up. From returns rendered to Parliament, we learn that from 1807 to 1846 the average annual number of slaves imported from the West Coast of Africa was 77,000. Of this number, perhaps, not more than sixty per cent. reached their destination, but as £50 could be obtained in America and elsewhere for each slave landed, the trade was a flourishing one, and even though pronounced illegal, was still considered by many an old slaving captain as well worth the risk of pursuing. By introducing (after 1808) an anti-slave trade clause in her treaties with foreign powers, England endeavoured to obtain the co-operation of Europe in abolishing the traffic; but although she became empowered to search suspected ships of other nations, and set free any slaves found on board, the rest of Europe was only half-hearted in the matter, and refrained from giving it any real support. The Portuguese vessels continued their activity, for Great Britain had no power to condemn the owners or crews to any sort of punishment, and the most that they suffered was the confiscation of their vessels if found to be carrying slaves, against which *contretemps* they were generally able to insure at Havana (Cuba). The means adopted by Great Britain² for the sup-

¹ Sweden ended her share in the trade in 1813; Holland in 1814; France in 1818.

² The United States had agreed in 1814 to assist Great Britain in the suppression of the slave-trade.

pression of the slave-trade, and which came into operation in 1819, consisted of the employment of a certain number of men-of-war, "authorized to capture vessels with slaves on board, fitted up for traffic, or aiding or abetting the slave-trade." Many slavers were in this way captured and taken to Sierra Leone, where their cargoes were set free; but it has always remained a matter of doubt if this system was altogether beneficial to the African himself. The trade had now become smuggling, but, the penalties to foreigners being light, it was indulged in by the Portuguese to as great an extent as previously. There was the risk of the loss of their vessels if captured, but, as the safe landing of one cargo out of three left them a handsome profit, the risk was worth running, and, in order to increase their profits, the slave-traders now carried heavier cargo than before—a great many more slaves than their vessels could accommodate. The system adopted for the suppression of the traffic, therefore, increased the misery of the African's voyage to America; half of those shipped died from overcrowding before being landed; while, if the slaver was chased by a British cruiser, the slaves were generally thrown overboard.

For fifteen years or so most Englishmen were fully content with what was being done to suppress the slave-trade, though in reality it was not showing signs of any decrease. Instead of striking at the root of the evil, all that was being done was pruning the branches, which naturally strengthened the growth. What would be thought of a surgeon who, knowing that the bullet was still in the body, attempted a cure by rubbing ointment on the surface of the wound? Yet this was what was being attempted. The slave-catching squadron was engaged in merely trying to cut short the supply, while nothing was being done to decrease the demand. Many remedies were recommended by men who had studied the subject; Buxton devoted all his time and attention to it; but

the means eventually adopted—and, as we know, with success—were, up to this time, never even suggested. This was in short to abolish the demand; for with slaves as with most other commodities, if there is no demand there will be no supply. But before relating how this was accomplished, we will say something about the various remedies suggested to put an end to the trade. Buxton,¹ who was the great authority of his day, and who had gained for himself the name of the “Friend of Africa,” proposed the following as a most effectual cure: “1st, impede and discourage the slave traffic; 2nd, establish and encourage legitimate commerce; 3rd, promote and teach agriculture; 4th, impart moral and religious instruction.” To accomplish the first, he recommended that we should “increase and concentrate our squadron, and make treaties with the chiefs of the coast, the rivers, and the interior.” To accomplish the second, “obtain commanding positions, settle factories, and send out trading ships.” To accomplish the third, “set on foot an agricultural company; obtain by treaty lands for cultivation, with so much power as may be necessary to keep the slave-trade at a distance.” To accomplish the fourth, “support the benevolent Association now established.” Each and all of these schemes were attempted by the British Government; how they fared the reader will have discovered from the perusal of the accounts of the different Niger Expeditions.

The root of the whole evil lay in the demand for black labour in America and the West Indies. Had America never been discovered, then probably the slave trade would never have existed. A few negroes might have been introduced into Europe, but with the rapid increase of the white population requiring to earn its living, the black workmen could never have become a necessity or a desideratum. With-

¹ *The African Slave Trade, and its Remedy.* By Thomas Fowell Buxton.

out black labour the West Indies and the southern parts of America could not be developed; the climate was unsuited to Europeans, who were unable to do more than reside in the country and supervise the work of others. Without desiring in any way to defend the means resorted to to solve the difficulty, we would point out that but for the introduction of the African into the Western World, vast tracts of fertile and productive lands, and wealthy stores of valuable minerals, would have remained for centuries sealed up. The world was not far enough advanced in the scale of civilization to think of working out a scheme for the supply of free labour; Asia was at that time too far off to be drawn on for Indian or Chinese coolies, even had it been possible to obtain them; what more natural, then, than that, with the very material at hand, attention should immediately have been turned to Africa. To obtain the negro labourer by fair means, probably never entered anyone's head; the buying and selling of slaves was known to be indigenous to Africa, and nothing was simpler than to develop the export trade. Had this trade been humanely conducted, then possibly no great harm would have been done, for, as Crouch remarks, "the lot of a slave in the West Indies, with all that has been said against it, must have been infinitely preferable to that of his companions left behind in Africa, subject to fall a victim to the dreaded fetish, the sacrificial knife, or a lingering death by famine." But it was not humanely conducted either by seller, or buyer, or middle-man, as we know too well from the mass of sensational literature published on the subject.

To return: in 1807 the Act was passed abolishing the *slave-trade*, or, more correctly, making it illegal; in 1833 followed the Act by which *slavery* was abolished in the British possessions in the West Indies from the 1st August, 1834. The sum of £20,000,000 was voted as compensation to the slave-owners, though, as a matter of fact, only a



A CORNER OF MUKOTO.

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portion of this was expended ; children under six years of age, or born after the Act came into force, were declared free ; while registered slaves above six years of age became apprenticed labourers with weekly wages (either in money or board and lodging), and enjoyed all the rights of freemen.¹ This was a good deal for a nation to do for the sake of philanthropy ;² but this was not all that England did, for in 1820 she bribed Spain with £400,000, and in 1836 Portugal with £300,000, to prohibit their subjects from exporting African slaves, even though they were at the time the property of Europeans residing in the Portuguese-African possessions. In spite of the fact that there was no longer a market for slaves in the British possessions, and that trading in negroes had been made illegal for all Europeans, the traffic did not lessen, for there was still a ready sale in the Brazils and in the Spanish possessions. Consequently, as there was a demand, there was no diminution in the supply ; the British and certain other European possessions were, it is true, closed, and the risk of carrying slaves had become much greater, but the only effect of this was to make it a more speculative business and to raise the price of the slave. So matters continued for many a long year ; the slave-trade had been declared illegal by every civilized power, but slavery itself continued to be legal in many parts, and, as an instance of what this meant, we may quote the case of Brazil. In 1826 the slave-trade was prohibited ; in 1830 it was declared piracy ; yet evidence is forthcoming to show that between 1830 and 1850 no fewer than 54,000 African slaves were by some means or

¹ 770,280 slaves were set free.

² "There is not, perhaps, to be found in the whole history of the world a more striking instance of national virtue than that of a great people, uninfluenced by any meaner motive, compassionating the condition of a subject race in a far distant part of the world, freely and unrepiningly consecrating the enormous sum of twenty millions of money to purchase its freedom."—*W. Nassau Molesworth*.

other introduced annually into the country. The total abolition of slavery was more than most nations felt inclined to undertake; to follow England's example and compensate the slave-owners was not in their power, though in the end it was found to be the only remedy, and year by year the limits of slavery grew narrower, until, in 1888, Brazil finally closed the western market for ever by abolishing slavery.¹

In the meanwhile, however, the export of slaves from the West Coast of Africa had practically long since ceased. The preventive squadron had been successful, at any rate, in reducing the number of points on the coast whence slaves were shipped; but what brought the trade to an end was the more direct administration assumed by Great Britain over most of the important districts where slavery was carried on. Watched both by sea and land, the slave-trader soon found that the West Coast was closed to him, and consequently transferred his operations to the East Coast, where he knew that from Portuguese territory he could still obtain the number of slaves that he required to supply Brazil and other places. The civil war in America still further reduced the demand, and from 1861, when Lagos (the principal place on the Slave Coast) passed into our hands, and when the American War broke out, the slave-trade on the West Coast of Africa was supplanted by legitimate commerce in palm-oil and other commodities. Looking back on the slave-trade now that it has died out, we find that its short life of rather less than four hundred years has revolutionized more than half the world. On the development of America and the West Indies we have already dwelt; slavery and the slave-trade played a conspicuous part, at one time, in European politics; they indirectly conduced to the opening up of West

¹ Slavery was abolished in the French Colonies in 1848; in Dutch West Indies, 1863; in Porto Rico, 1873; in St. Thomas (Portuguese), 1876; in Cuba, 1886.

Africa; they brought on the four years' Civil War in America; and their effects remain to form the great twentieth-century problem of the United States. These are but a few of the results of the slave-trade and slavery; had it never been, we should have had no West India regiments for our little wars, and, to descend to more familiar things, no Christy Minstrels, breakdowns, plantation songs, no "Uncle Remus," and possibly no sugar!

Turning now to the second part of the chapter—slave-raiding—we find before us one of the great African problems of the day; a matter of such importance that, unless means are found to suppress it, Europe can hope to derive but little benefit from the countries she has appropriated. Writing merely of West Africa, and of that of only the British Possessions, there is ample evidence of the state of affairs existing throughout the whole of Tropical Africa, for slavery and slave-raiding are as rampant in the east as in the west of the great continent. This slave-raiding has gone on for countless ages; it was in full force centuries before the establishment of the oversea slave-trade, though doubtless that disgraceful traffic gave it a greater impetus: slavery, as we have said, is indigenous to the country, and the necessity for possessing slaves has made slave-raiding always a most lucrative occupation. Thus, the white man is not entirely responsible for the present position of the African slave, but at the same time he has had a good deal to say to it. In early times, i.e. some five or six centuries ago, slave-raiding, as now practised, was possibly unknown; slavery existed, it is true, but the slaves were mostly captives of fair war and their descendants, who, of course, remained slaves. The demand for slaves when the oversea trade commenced was greater than the slave-owning chiefs could supply, and so tempting were the inducements offered that they soon found means to fill the barracoons. Quarrels were picked with

their neighbours, and fierce struggles took place between the various tribes, until eventually legitimate warfare became almost a thing of the past, and the coast-tribes were nothing more than slave-catchers and kidnappers.

To supply the European slave-dealer was now the sole idea of the West Coast chief, whose craving for European commodities was insatiable ; he wanted the spirituous liquors which the white man had to dispose of, and slave-catching was a quicker and more remunerative business than the production of palm-oil. In order to complete the work, weapons and gunpowder were required, and these were also supplied by the white man. As far as the coast was concerned, therefore, while the oversea slave-trade was in existence, the amount of cheap drink, arms, and ammunition poured into the country was enormous. Thus drunkenness and its attendant vices were largely increased by the accursed trade, and the civilization of the people retarded by several decades, if not centuries. Even when trading in palm-oil took the place of trading in human beings, the demand for liquor and munitions of war continued. Slaves were now required in great numbers by the chiefs themselves in order to carry on the palm-oil trade, and slave-raiding consequently did not abate, but if anything increased. Little attention was paid to all this : Great Britain—virtually the only European Power represented—had quite enough to do to look after the small coast possessions which she occupied, and her power a few miles from the sea was *nil* ; with trade matters the trader alone was concerned, and a considerable part of the trade was carried on where Great Britain had no jurisdiction whatever. These were the days of the Palm-Oil Ruffian, who cared little how he obtained his oil, so long as he was able to enrich himself. The black man asked for spirits and weapons, and they were accordingly bartered with him ; what was it to the white man that depravity and vice were on the

increase? or that his method of trade was producing internecine warfare among the coast tribes?

Coming down to modern times: twenty years ago (or in many parts much more recently), there was hardly a tribe who knew what a year of peace meant; slave-raiding went on within a mile of the small British possessions, and domestic slavery was not interfered with, but rather acknowledged, by the British authorities. With regard to this domestic slavery, a word of explanation is necessary, for one is apt to imagine that anything connected with slavery is bad. Domestic slavery, pure and simple, is an institution as natural to the African as freedom is to the Briton; he is born a slave, and his parents have been slaves before him; he is well treated by his master, receives his protection, works for him, and takes an interest in his affairs. He has many privileges, and by hard work can even save money, become wealthy, and be himself an owner of slaves. Such is the bright side of domestic slavery; there is also a dark side. The children born of the slaves of a household are not sufficiently numerous to supply the wants of their owner, and, in consequence, the deficiency has to be met by raiding and kidnapping. The captive, being of a tribe different from that of his owner, naturally resents his enforced servitude, and suffers ill-treatment and hardships, culminating not infrequently in his death. Were the chiefs content to hold none but slave-born domestics—born that is in their own households—then it is doubtful if any great crusade would have been made against the *status* of slavery, at any rate for some years to come. But the perpetual raiding of peaceful tribes has thrown the whole country into such a state of unrest and consequent backwardness that, unless immediate action be taken, it bids fair to be utterly ruined.

So far we have been speaking only of the pagan tribes in the vicinity of the coast, amongst whom slave-raiding is not

carried on to anything like the extent that it is among the Mohammedans further inland. In the Mohammedan countries, which now form parts of the hinterlands of all our West African possessions, slave-raiding is a profession, followed by every Mohammedan who can muster a band of armed men. Their objects are to capture as many pagans as they can, either retaining them as camp and domestic servants, or disposing of them by public sale. A very large number also are required for the payment of tribute by the smaller chiefs to their superiors, and in the Sokoto Empire, where each year the Fulah raiders have to travel further south to make their captures, the devastation of pagan villages is almost incredible. The Emir of Adamawa, it is said, sends ten thousand slaves annually to the Sultan of Sokoto; the distance is roughly eight hundred miles, and the hardships endured on the journey are so great that probably not one half of those who leave Yola reach Wurno. This is only one of a score of instances, and, to testify to the numbers of pagans who are continually being captured, we have the evidence of Mr. C. H. Robinson,¹ who had every opportunity during his recent residence in Kano of looking into the state of affairs. He tells us that parties of Mohammedans were constantly arriving with gangs of newly-captured slaves, and that on one occasion he saw upwards of a thousand captives brought in by a single raiding party. We know also what went on in Nupé only two years ago, and it is the same in all these Mohammedan States; slaves as matters stand are a necessity, and they must be obtained at all costs, consequently there must be perpetual raiding. But the slave-tribute, enormous as it is, does not account for a tithe of the pagans captured, and the remainder go to the slave market, which exists in every town of any size. Here they find a ready sale, their purchasers employing them either as domestic servants,

¹ *Hausaland*. 1896.

labourers, or carriers.¹ The more land a man possesses, the more slaves he requires to cultivate it, and the larger his household the greater number of harem attendants, concubines, and servants, though perhaps the majority of the slaves are employed as carriers, or what may be termed beasts of burden. To understand the situation aright, the reader must bear in mind three things, viz.:—that in these countries there is no free labour, no portable currency, and no means of transporting goods from place to place except on the heads of natives. For these reasons the travelling merchant is obliged to use slaves, and we will give an example. A merchant is going from Kano to the ivory markets in German Adamawa, and proposes taking with him a stock of tobes and cotton goods, and a supply of cowries for making small purchases on the road—all bulky articles. Accordingly, he goes to the slave market and purchases the number of slaves necessary to carry his merchandise and provisions for the journey. After travelling for a few days, he finds that the consumption of the provisions has reduced the loads of his carriers and he is able to dispense with the services of one or two of them, and for these he can always obtain a fair price. At Yakoba or Yola he stays for several days to enjoy himself, and pays his bill by dropping a slave. Thus in reality slaves are a currency—fluctuating, perhaps, but portable—far more so than their value in cowries, the only other universal currency of the country.

As with the oversea slave-trade so with the internal slave-trade; the whole matter resolves itself into a question of demand and supply. We have given an idea of what the demand is, and how the supply is kept up, but it should be noted that the supply—raid as the Mohammedans do—is

¹ A few slaves are transported across the Sahara to the Mediterranean ports, whence they pass to Turkey and other Mohammedan countries.

never equal to the demand ; what has now to be considered is how the demand can be abolished, or, at any rate, lessened. With regard to the domestic slaves and labourers of the Mohammedans, nothing much can be done, at least for some considerable time, though when our position in the country becomes stronger, the legal *status* of slavery will, of course, be abolished in the Mohammedan States as it has been in most of our coast possessions, and quite recently as far north as the Middle Niger.¹ Until this step is taken there must be a demand for slaves, but not necessarily a very enormous one, and, were it possible to do away with the carrier slave, then in all probability the annual amount of captures would be reduced by something like two-thirds. If we assume that thirty per cent. of the pagans captured die before being put in harness (a low estimate), and that sixty per cent. are eventually used for carrier work, then by abolishing the carrier, we should reduce the number of captures by nearly eighty per cent. This would be a good beginning, and the suggested methods for accomplishing it are these—the improvement of communications throughout the country, and the introduction of a portable currency.

The first of these methods is now being attempted in several directions, but it must necessarily be many years before good roads and railways traverse the interior parts ; though were West Africa treated as seriously as British East Africa, three or four years might see railways opening up all our hinterlands, and connecting the Mohammedan countries with the coast. In Gambia and Sierra Leone slave-raiding is confined to the borders of the hinterlands, and the few chiefs who devote their attentions to this means of getting a livelihood, are held in check by the ever-watchful constabulary. To the north of the Gold Coast, the great trouble is the powerful force under Samory, whose roving

¹ *Ide* page 274.

disposition increases the difficulty of coping with him ; but with the Sofas and other raiders west of Lagos, it is impossible to deal except by having recourse to arms. It is among the Fulahs of the Sokoto Empire that more peaceful methods can be employed, and where the construction of roads and railways would lead to good results. With a line running from Lagos to Ilorin, thence to Bida and Sokoto, and continued through Kano to Lake Chad, the Bornu and Hausa merchants who frequent this great trade route would no longer require carrier slaves, while with branch lines connecting with ports on the Benué River, all that vast tract of country situated between the Sahara and the Middle Niger and Benué would be thoroughly opened up. The nature of the country presents no great obstacles to the construction of such lines, but the outlay would, of course, be heavy, and unfortunately none of our West African possessions are at present sufficiently flourishing to be able to do more than make a very gradual advance into the interior. In the meanwhile there is much that may be done at comparatively small cost ; roads a few feet in width can be made along the route which the railway will eventually take ; small military posts established here and there on these roads, with caravanserais a day's journey apart ; while passenger steamers plying on the main rivers would in a very short space of time become immensely popular. We are only now advocating these measures as a peaceable way of reducing the amount of slave-raiding, but the reader can draw his own conclusions as to the advantages which would indirectly accrue to trade by their adoption. The cost of the transport of merchandise would be small, in place of being a very heavy item, and the country and its inhabitants would become settled, whereby the resources of the former, and the industrious habits of the latter, would have a chance of being fully developed. Fortunately the Government is fully alive to

all this, and the pushing forward of advanced posts, and the improvement of communications in the Fulah Empire are even now being put into execution.

We now come to the question of currency, about which we have said something in relation to trading operations in Nigeria. It affects slave-raiding in this wise: there being no portable currency in the country, an immense number of slaves are required to carry heavy goods for barter which would not be the case did money exist. For, in the instance given above of the Kano merchant travelling to the ivory market at Banyo, although he might have to purchase slaves to carry his ivory on the return journey, he would probably set out from Kano alone, with his money tied up in the corner of his *tobe*; and this he would certainly do were there good roads, protected by military posts. The extraordinary thing is that the country has gone on for such a length of time without a real currency, considering that the Hausa merchants are probably as business-like a class as is to be found anywhere out of Europe. But the natives themselves are well aware of the advantages of a currency, and would certainly welcome any reliable form of money. As a proof of this, it may be mentioned that a great number of the tribes employ some sort of currency other than slaves and cowries. Thus, in the Oil Rivers for several centuries, bundles of brass or copper rods (imported from England) have had their fixed value, by means of which other purchases can be made, and in two or three of the rivers horseshoe-like pieces of mixed metal, known as *manillas*, are used in place of money. Similarly, some of the pagan tribes of the Benué employ pieces of iron resembling a small hoe, which are tied up in bundles, thirty-six being the price of a prime slave. In Borgu, also, iron hoes have their fixed value, the slave as usual being the standard. Barth tells us that the ancient standard of Bornu

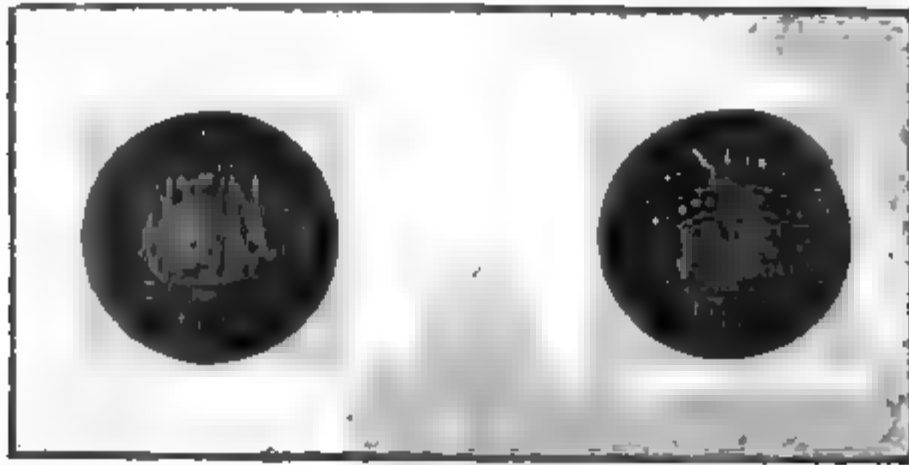
was the *rotl* (a pound of copper), while four *gabagas* (strips of cotton cloth) went to the *rotl*, and on the introduction of cowries, eight of these to the *gabaga*.¹ In Timbuctoo the standard consisted of a *mithkal* of gold dust, weighing ninety-six grains of wheat, and fixed at four thousand cowries; and in the neighbourhood of the Gold Coast, gold dust, even now, takes the place of money altogether. Besides these and various like currencies, there is one of very considerable importance, since it shows that in Bornu and the Hausa States specie would be popular among the merchants. We refer to the dollar, which, more than half a century ago, had become a standard in Kano and other large trade centres, with a value of 2500 cowries. These dollars are said to have been originally introduced into Bornu from the Mediterranean, and, though some few Spanish and Mexican are found, the principal are the Maria Theresa, numbers of which are still brought to the country from the north. As the people do not readily understand the principles of new dies, and are suspicious of a strange coin, the old pattern of dollar (with date 1780) is still struck in Austria for special export to Central Africa. The eagerness with which these coins are received is proof sufficient that the time is ripe in the Mohammedan States for the introduction of a money currency. The cumbersome methods of barter, and the use of slaves and cowries as a medium of exchange, are altogether behind the times, and most of our coast possessions have long since introduced the use of English money.

Macgregor Laird, soon after he commenced operations in the Niger, became convinced that barter was too precarious a method of conducting business, and had some special coins struck for trade purposes. Very possibly he was premature in his ideas, but in any case the system was never given a trial, as the circulation of the coins was held to be illegal.

¹ Known in some parts as *leppi*.

After this, as far as the Niger was concerned, no attempt was made to introduce European money, though independent traders from time to time took to the Niger new English silver coins, which were much prized by the natives, who converted them into rings and other ornaments. Later on spurious imitations were imported, but their worthlessness soon became known, and the effect of their introduction was to make the people suspicious of all coins.

The time appears to have now come for establishing a currency on a sound basis, and when once the principles of a legal tender become thoroughly understood, and the natives



LAIRD MONEY.

become convinced that the value of the coins is fixed and guaranteed by the British Government, the advantages of the system over slaves and cowries will be at once realized. What particular description of coin would best suit the requirements of the country, and in what manner the circulation should be initiated, are minor details which it is unnecessary to enter into here. The main point is, that as long as the land remains without a portable money currency, slaves will be employed by the native trader in the dual capacity of beast of burden and cheque-book; and, consequently, slave-raiding to supply these necessities will continue. With a money currency the demand for carriers

would diminish, if not disappear, and tribute would be paid in the coin of the realm instead of in slaves.

Without dwelling on the motives, religious or otherwise, of human sacrifices, it is necessary to refer to these enormities, as they affect the demand for slaves among the pagan tribes. The slaves offered as sacrifices are invariably selected from those captured in war, not from the domestic slaves born in the household; and as, on great occasions, a wholesale slaughter of slaves takes place, the numbers required for this custom alone are very large. There is, of course, only one method of checking this demand, viz. the suppression of human sacrifices, and, owing to the energetic action of British officials, they are happily becoming each year less common. With such human sacrifice centres as Kumassi and Benin broken down, a great blow has been dealt to the practice; but, at the same time, it is a mistake to suppose that the people see the error of their ways; for, were all Europeans to withdraw from the Coast, it is more than probable that human sacrifices would immediately be indulged in by tribes who are now held to be civilized Africans. But Europeans have no intention of withdrawing; moreover, they are, year by year, establishing themselves more firmly in the country, and the total abolition of human sacrifices is merely a matter of time.

To sum up in the matter of slavery and slave-raiding as now existing in British West Africa:—We have seen that slave-raiding is followed as a profession by a vast number of Mohammedan chiefs, and that kidnapping and inter-tribal warfare for the purpose of capturing slaves is pursued by the pagans of all parts which are not under the immediate supervision of British officials. The slaves thus captured are required for various purposes, as domestic servants, trading boys, harem attendants, concubines, and carriers, for prædial labour, and as soldiers to swell the ranks of the

raiding chiefs; while, among the pagans, they have the further use of furnishing the material for human sacrifices. For the extirpation of slave-raiding it is recommended, besides the employment of force, to endeavour to diminish the demand for slaves of the carrier class by the construction of roads and railways, and by the introduction of a monetary currency—both feasible plans; to diminish the demand for slaves of other kinds by the gradual substitution of paid labour for slavery; and, furthermore, to stamp out human sacrifices.

It remains only to discuss the question of the abolition of the legal *status* of slavery, about the rights and wrongs of which opinions differ very considerably. There are many good points connected with domestic slavery, and could the chiefs be prevented from increasing their stock of slaves except by the births in their households, then it would, perhaps, be wise to let well alone. But this is impossible, for while domestic slavery in any form exists, no amount of legislation is able to prevent the chiefs from smuggling slaves into their households from outside, and slave-raiding must go on. At the same time, it is doubtful if all parts of British West Africa are ready for the abolition of this domestic slavery; in our older African colonies no form of slavery is recognized, and domestic slavery is dying a natural death. To issue, in our newly-acquired territories, a sweeping proclamation making the holding of slaves illegal, and requiring existing slave-holders to at once give up their slaves, would lead to hardships almost impossible to realize. Slavery is so ingrained in the people that to be suddenly thrown on their own resources would result in half the slaves dying of starvation. Whatever steps are to be taken must be gradual, and in such Mohammedan countries as the Hausa States, if an abolition proclamation is to mean anything, there must be sufficient force at hand to back it up. All that can

be hoped, for the present, in our newer possessions, is what was done two years ago in a portion of the Niger Territories, viz. the abolition of the legal *status* of slavery. By this is implied, not that it is illegal to hold slaves, but that the owner of slaves will no longer be supported by the British Government with regard to his property in his slaves; he cannot demand their restoration should they run away; while the slave himself is free to leave his owner and claim his freedom whenever he desires to do so, and the liability of the owner for the wrong-doings of the slave is no greater than that of master and servant in English law. By thus applying the thin end of the wedge, it can gradually be driven home, until the time arrives for splitting asunder a system so repugnant to civilized sentiment. To do more than this during the next few years in our hinterlands would be to court complete failure.





CHAPTER XX.

RELIGION AND MISSIONARIES.

THE religions, or beliefs, of the people of this particular quarter of Africa may be divided for convenience into Christianity, Mohammedanism, and Paganism, the two former having been introduced from outside in more modern times. In describing Paganism as a religion, we use the term in its wide sense, i.e. a system of faith and worship, and before dwelling on the advent of the Crescent and the Cross into West Africa, we will glance at some of the pagan beliefs of the aborigines, for, savage though the various tribes may be, there is none devoid of a belief in some deity, and most have an idea of the soul and of a future state. These ideas may be confused, and, to the Christian or Mohammedan absurd, but after all they are no more peculiar than were the pre-Christian beliefs of our own ancestors. The pagan is neither atheist nor agnostic; and his religion, with its superstitious rites, so-called fetish and juju, binds him probably more tightly than do the doctrines of Christianity or Islam their followers.

Although the tribes are widely scattered, and hold religious views differing in many particulars from each other, there has been found to be a certain similarity in the conceptions of all the West Coast pagans. In the main their beliefs are identical with what in Europe we now term "superstition"; two centuries ago very similar ideas were held by such northern Christians as the Scandinavians, and a student of

folk-lore will find in the wilds of Ireland, even to-day, traces of not a few of the superstitious customs of the African pagans.¹ This is the case with the general belief in invisible beings, or "spirits," capable of working good or evil against mankind; whether the origin of this animism, so prevalent among all primitive and uncivilized people in every part of the world, is to be found, as Lubbock and Herbert Spencer suggest, in the dreams of the sleeper, or whether the African may be considered as a species of "medium" dwelling in "Borderland," are questions beyond the scope of this work. Certain it is, however, that every action of the pagan African is influenced by his unbounded faith, for weal or for woe, in the spirit world. There are spirits who rule the sea, the rivers and the streams, the mountains, the valleys, the forests, the wind, lightning and thunder, and all the elements. To the savage mind these spirits are mostly inimical to mankind, and, unless humoured, are ever ready to work destruction; consequently the spirit is raised to the rank of a deity, and propitiated with such votive offerings as are thought to be particularly appreciated by this exalted being. There is nothing new in all this; it is merely the earliest stage of uncivilized religion, or, to put it plainly, the pagan African is in his religious views (if not in most other respects) some ten or fifteen centuries behind the times. This fact is what Europeans are so prone to forget; "horrible atrocities" are frequently chronicled from West Africa, and are regarded (perhaps naturally) by us as the most vicious acts of a depraved people, whereas, in reality, to the perpetrators they form an essential part of their religion—the Human Sacrifice means no more to the pagan than does the Harvest Festival to ourselves—and the pagan's faith, be it remembered, is implanted far deeper in his daily life than is the religion of any civilized people.

¹ *Vide* Chapter XXIII.

To enumerate all the gods of the pagan West Africans would be an impossibility ; a few deities are common to several tribes, or even to two or more nations ; other deities are worshipped by a single tribe or family ; while, lastly, each individual of any importance has a god of his own. The pagan, therefore, has to be perpetually thinking of a number of deities, all of whom require to be propitiated with offerings and sacrifices, to lighten which task priests become a necessity. The duty of these priests was originally to take care of the offerings and guard the locality where the god resided ; but as time went on they formed themselves into a distinct class, and gradually assumed the rôle of intercessor between the man and his god, until eventually they came to be considered almost as powerful as the god himself, whose mouthpiece they professed to be. By cunning and trickery the priesthood became paramount, and to this day in such parts as the Oil Rivers the jujuman rules the people with a rod of iron. Between the chief deities and his worshippers there is no direct intercourse, the priest alone being able to hold communications with the god ; but with the man's private god matters are different ; it is his own particular affair, and brooks no outside interference ; for by the man himself was the god created. Ellis relates fully how a Gold Coast native procures for himself a god. He betakes himself to a gloomy recess of the forest where one of the local higher deities is known to reside, and propitiates the deity by pouring rum on the ground ; after this he proceeds to make his god, which may consist of one of four materials, viz. a bough cut from the spot, and shaped roughly into the figure of a man ; a piece of stone ; the root of a plant, scraped, and ground into a paste with the blood of a fowl ; or some red earth mixed with blood or rum. The last two materials are kept in the man's house in a brass pan adorned with parrot's feathers, and are always covered with shea-butter. As soon as the

material for the god has been prepared, a further ceremony is gone through in order to induce the higher deity to pass a spirit into it; and when all has been satisfactorily accomplished the god is taken home, given a name, and carefully looked after. A small portion of the daily food is placed upon it, and it becomes part and parcel of the man's life. It protects him from injury, makes him prosperous, and, through it, its worshippers can procure the death of any of his enemies. Its actions, whether good or evil, are worked by means of charms made for it and dedicated to it—a bundle of twigs, a bunch of feathers, and a variety of articles, into which the virtue of the god passes by a process of incantation.

The higher deities consist for the most part of one or two superior ones worshipped by a whole nation. These are usually held to be visible only to the priests, and their spirits dwell in a grove or in a hill in some sequestered spot, while a house with all conveniences is set apart for the god in the towns and large villages. He (or it may be she) is represented by an image in grotesque and hideous human form, before which offerings are made of every conceivable thing, from the human victim to a glass of gin. Days are set apart for its worship, and the wildest orgies are indulged in by the people, human sacrifices, followed by smearing the blood on the images, forming a special feature of the festivals at places outside British jurisdiction. These more important deities control all minor deities, thus the numerous local gods are created by them, while the local gods in their turn spiritualize the tutelary deity of the individual. The local deities are many and various; any accident that occurs is attributed to the malevolence of some spirit, and if the spot had previously no deity, one is immediately instituted. Thus in all parts are seen trees, rocks and such like things which are held by the people to be sacred, and where offerings are periodically

made. There is no river without its god, who, in the shape of a crocodile or other probable annihilator of mankind, must be propitiated before embarking on its waters. A large tree by the wayside might fall and crush a passer-by, it is therefore considered to be the abode of a god, and revered accordingly. In this manner every striking object in nature is worshipped, not because it is one of nature's wonders, but because it is thought that it contains the spirit of an evil-working deity. Beneficent spirits are almost unknown to the pessimistic African, to whom existence must seem a veritable struggle, for though he has the consolation of praying to his private god, he is all the while aware that the spirit in the befeathered brass pot is, as it were, a vassal of the great god that lives beneath the shade of the *bombax* tree.

There is one thing about this West African paganism that is certainly peculiar; in most primitive religions, almost the earliest form of worship, after that of trees and stones, was that of the heavenly bodies, the principal of which were regarded as man-like gods. The ancient Greeks, Romans, Hindus, Persians, New Zealanders, Norsemen, and others, all bowed down before the sun, the moon, and the stars. But as a rule the West African apparently pays no attention to these things;¹ they do not appeal to him, because he takes them as objects too far away to affect him, though not uncommonly his principal deity is the general controller of the firmament—a Jupiter or sky-god in fact.² Lightning, he knows, harms him; rain assists in the production of his crops; wind and tornadoes work destruction; such things, therefore, are controlled by a god, whom it is necessary to worship. The stars, the moon, and the sun remain in the heavens, and do

¹ There are some slight traces, among the Yorubas, of the worship of the sun and the moon.

² Olorun, the principal god of the Yorubas, is considered to be, as the name implies, owner of the sky.

not concern themselves in the affairs of this world, for which reason the African regards them merely as harmless ornaments hung in the skies. With regard to the gods of the elements, the wind-god of the Yorubas, says Burton, "is shut in a cave, under a guardian called Wuo-hun-to, who, after oiling his own body, which would otherwise be cut up by the wind, opens the gate and lets his charge issue to torment the world." Shango, the god of thunder and lightning, is thus described by Ellis:—"He dwells in the clouds in an immense brazen palace, where he maintains a large retinue and keeps a great number of horses; for, besides being the thunder-god, he is also the god of the chase and of pillage. From his palace Shango hurls upon those who have offended him red-hot chains of iron, which are forged for him by his brother Ogun, god of iron and of war." The god of the sea is Olokun, "of human shape and black in colour, but with long flowing hair, and he resides in a vast palace under the sea, where he is served by a number of sea-spirits, some of whom are human in shape, while others partake more or less of the nature of fish." These gods and many more of the same kind are all chief deities worshipped by the majority of the people, but in addition every river has its own god, to which sacrifices are made by the natives dwelling near at hand, and it should be observed that the conception of these deities is that they are of human form, though invisible to man, except perhaps at times to the priests.

The numerous images or idols found to be presumably worshipped in West Africa has led to the notion that the pagan imagines that the carved wood or stone, the moulded clay, or the material in the brass pot is actually a god. This is erroneous; no West African native believes that any of these articles are in themselves gods, though he does believe that the spirit of a god has entered into them, and it

is to this spirit that he makes his offering. This error has crept in by means of the improper use of the word *fetish*¹—of Portuguese origin, and altogether unknown to the negro. It is applied nowadays by the European to everything connected with the religion of the pagans, though in reality it means “a tangible and inanimate object worshipped for itself alone”—a thing never found in West Africa, which has, therefore, been wrongly called the “Land of Fetish.” The mistake arose, doubtless, from the misconception of early travellers, who, seeing the people offering sacrifices before a tree or an image, very naturally concluded that the tree or the image was the deity worshipped, but fuller inquiry has elicited the true state of the case: an object is held sacred only because the spirit of a god has passed into it, and if, under any circumstances, the spirit should abandon its dwelling-place, the object would be discarded as valueless. We have mentioned how spiritual virtue is passed into various charms, which then possess powers of working good or evil, and it is to these things in particular that the term “fetish” is so frequently applied by Europeans. Charms or amulets (unlike images, for example) are not supposed to contain the spirit of a deity, but obtain their virtue by being consecrated by the priests, and are usually worn round the neck or arm, the wearer believing that by these distinguishing marks he will be known to his god and protected from misfortune. Various other kinds of charms are also in use, and where the pagans come in contact with Mohammedans, verses of the Koran written by the latter and sewn up in cloth or leather are considered to be particularly effective; but in this matter the heathen is not peculiar, for the Mohammedans themselves have a firm belief in the value of such things.

¹ A corruption of *feitico*, an amulet or charm.

For his god or gods the pagan deems it necessary to show his reverence by offering some form of sacrifice; something which in thus offering is an actual sacrifice or denial to himself; a portion of his daily food is set apart for his god, or, before drinking his palm wine, he pours out a little of it as a libation. Again, the merchant returning from a successful journey will offer a part of his gains to the deity who has been instrumental in bringing him good fortune; while on great occasions sacrifices of living animals are made, the shedding of blood being considered an act in particular favour with the more important gods. The highest form of blood offering is, of course, the sacrifice of human beings, and it is easy to understand why this should be so; for, as the goat has a higher monetary value than the fowl, so the slave (treated as a mere chattel) is worth considerably more than any other animal. But this is not the only reason why human sacrifices take the first rank, and probably the real origin of this form of human sacrifice is to be found in the ancient beliefs of all peoples that in warfare the invisible gods of one side contended with the invisible gods of the other side, and that the victorious deities required as a thank-offering, for having aided their worshippers, the sacrifice of a certain number¹ of the captives taken from the enemy. From this it became usual to keep the prisoners of war not required for immediate sacrifice as slaves until the gods demanded further propitiation and further shedding of blood. It is the slave's lot, therefore, to be sacrificed, and if misfortune or disease attack the people, their chief deity has to be appeased by a slaughter of slaves.

Passing from human sacrifice in its true sense to the slaughter of human beings for other purposes, we come to the more popular acceptation of the term, viz. the killing

¹ In 1727, when Whydah was conquered by Dahomey, 4000 Whydahs were slaughtered as a sacrifice to the gods of Dahomey.

of slaves on the death of their master, to accompany him to the other world. Before, however, discussing this second form of human sacrifice, it will be necessary to say something as to the belief of the West African pagan in the soul and a future state. Soul is perhaps hardly the right word, for the man's *kra* (as it is called by the Gold Coast pagans) is somewhat different to our conception of a soul. Still, most pagans who have risen above a condition of absolute savagery maintain that man (like the image of his god) is the dwelling-place of a guardian spirit, who entered the body of the man at his birth, and who leaves it at his death. This *kra*, at death, says Ellis, becomes a *sisá*, but can revert to the position of *kra* by being re-born in a new body. Before this latter event takes place, however, the *sisá* remains near the grave of the deceased, and it is for it that part of the food is provided by the mourners, otherwise the *sisá* becomes a malignant spirit, and brings misfortune on the dead man's house. After a period of a few months the *sisá* (should it not in the meanwhile have become a *kra*) must depart to *sisá*-land, whence it has the power of issuing and entering the body of a man when his *kra* is temporarily absent—an event which takes place when the man is sick or asleep. But the *sisá* is now an evil spirit, and the man is, as it were, "possessed of a devil," requiring the special exorcisms of the priests for its expulsion. The *kra* itself, therefore, is an earthly spirit, and has no connection with the Land of the Dead, which is peopled by shadowy human forms or ghosts of men—exact representations of what they had been in life.

Such is the belief of the tribes in the neighbourhood of the Gold Coast, and the other West African tribes differ in their views only slightly. The *kra* exists in all cases, though sometimes the man is considered to be the abode of more



Fig. 1. People in the forest.

than one spirit. Among the tribes westward of the Volta river there are two indwelling spirits, a good and a bad (female and male), who prompt the man to good or bad actions, thus forming what we would call his conscience. Then, again, the Yorubas have three such spirits, viz. *Olori*, in the head; *Ipin ijeun*, in the stomach; and *Ipori*, in the great toe—each distinct, but nevertheless working more or less in unison. Similarly, the pagan maintains that beasts and plants possess a second individuality or indwelling spirit, and that all such animate objects take their place equally with human beings in the Land of the Dead. Furthermore, the *kra* of a man may, after passing through the stage of *sisá* or *noli*,¹ be re-born in an animal or plant, and if re-born in an animal, show its disposition towards mankind by inhabiting a ferocious or a harmless beast. Neither is this all, for inanimate objects are capable, when buried with a corpse, of transmitting the ghosts of themselves to the world of shadows.

By a knowledge of these views regarding the pagan hereafter, it is easy to understand the reason for the wholesale slaughter of wives and slaves at the burial of a great man. His ghost will be like himself in every particular, and his new state will be a repetition of his life on earth, but in order that this may be so, it is necessary to send after him slaves and attendants sufficiently numerous to maintain his dignity. The ghost of the slave or of the wife accompanies the ghost of the master, who on his long journey refreshes himself by partaking of the ghost of the food that his relatives place by the side of his corpse; while the ghosts of his pipe, tobacco, weapons, &c., buried with him, continue to have their uses. The proper performance of funeral rites is

¹ The Ewes (Dahomey) call toadstools "*noli*-shelters," which may be compared to old European ideas about fairy-rings, &c.

of the greatest importance, as, if disregarded, the ghost of the man continues to haunt the world and annoy mankind—an idea which was not uncommon a few years ago even among civilized peoples.

Intimately associated with human sacrifice is cannibalism, which still prevails to a very great extent in British West Africa, though there is no proof that any of the known cannibal tribes of these parts ever eat human flesh from other than religious motives. Their cannibalism is not of the lower order—that is to say, the flesh is not eaten because it is enjoyed or to stay the pangs of hunger, but rather because the people are under the impression that the gods who have fought on their side demand that a proportion of the captives of war shall be eaten, in order that their fighting qualities may pass into the system of the conquerors. Such ideas are common to all primitive people, and if we are to believe Strabo, the ancient Britons, for similar reasons, were in the habit of devouring their dead relatives. This, then, is the primary cause of West African cannibalism, and very possibly the origin of it among all anthropophagous people. But besides eating the flesh of the slaughtered captives of war, no great human sacrifice offered for the purpose of appeasing the gods and averting sickness or misfortune is considered to be complete unless either the priests or the people eat the bodies of the victims. This is encouraged by the priests, who work up the people into a state of demoniacal frenzy, whereby to increase their faith in matters pertaining to religion. At Kumassi and Benin, prior to our recent occupation of those places, these revolting orgies were of very frequent occurrence, but, though they still go on within a few miles of some of our advanced posts on the Oil Rivers, it has seldom fallen to the lot of a European to be present at an actual cannibal feast. Consul Hutchinson, in 1859,

witnessed one of these orgies on a small scale, being concealed in a hut in front of the juju-house at Bonny. The occasion was the sacrifice of one man only, but it is not difficult to imagine, from the Consul's account of what he saw, what would take place at the slaughter of a hundred victims as a single sacrifice to an important deity. After describing how the unfortunate man was beheaded, and the head conveyed away to be cooked for the head juju-man, Hutchinson continues: "A yell, such as reminded me of a company of tigers, arose from the multitude; cutlasses were flourished as they crowded round the body of the dead man; sounds of cutting and chopping rose amidst the clamour of the voices, and I began to question myself whether, if I were on the other side of the River Styx, I should see what I was looking at here through the little slit in the wall of my hiding-place. A crowd of human vultures gloating over the headless corse of a murdered brother negro; boys and girls walking away from the crowd, holding pieces of bleeding flesh in their hands, while the dripping life-fluid marked their road as they went along; and one woman snapping from the hands of another—both of them raising their voices in clamour—a part of the body of that poor man, in whom the breath of life was vigorous not a quarter of an hour ago."

The eating of human flesh is also indulged in at special times by the priests of cannibal tribes, and in some parts it is a qualification for becoming a witch or for membership of such secret societies as those known as "human leopards" and "human crocodiles," but in every case it forms part of the religion of the natives. With regard to secret societies, we mentioned when treating of the customs of the people that most of the pagan tribes had some kind of freemasonry or secret organization, and though a few of them appear

to be unconnected with religion, the majority are certainly altogether of a religious character. Little has so far been discovered concerning the rites, ceremonies, or laws of any of these societies, and so well is the secrecy maintained, that, though they are gradually being abolished as harmful, it is doubtful if their true nature will ever be brought to light. The society with which Europeans have come most in contact is the Egbo of the Niger Coast Protectorate. This has numerous branches, subdivided into various grades, and its power is supreme. By means of the Egbo all enemies are detected, or pretended to be so, and the priests or juju-men are, as a rule, the heads of the various branches, with free license to perpetrate every species of enormity. Disguised in hideous wooden masks and strange dresses, they issue forth to prey on the minds of the miserable people, to whom the sound of the Egbo horn or beil is the signal for a general stampede, for anyone found abroad by the Egbo is severely beaten, if not torn to pieces. The juju-man is at once priest, oracle, detective, judge, and executioner, and he has the power of placing a religious prohibition on anything he pleases, which is then said to be "juju." In the detection of crime he has recourse to witchcraft, sorcery, and ordeal of fire or of poisoned water, and to fall foul of the juju-man means almost certain destruction.

The word *juju*, found only in the neighbourhood of the Oil Rivers, is used indiscriminately by Europeans for all matters which may be considered to form a part of the pagan's religion, and as a synonym for *fetish*; thus, the priest is a juju-man, his temple a juju-house, to take an oath is to "swear juju," and so on. Like *fetish*, it is of European origin, being, as Miss Kingsley tells us, nothing more than a corruption of the French *joujou*, though it is extensively used by the English-speaking natives of these regions. In the

interior, north of New Calabar and Opobo, lies what is known as the "Long Juju" country, in which, according to native report, is the Supreme Juju Court. This by some is said to be the town of Bendi,¹ but the head priests alone are aware of the exact locality, and the secret is guarded most jealously. The accounts given of the place vary very considerably, though it appears certain that it is the court of final ordeal, to which all cases that the local juju-men, for one reason or another, do not wish to decide, are referred. The threat of "Long Juju" is held over his trading-boys by the chief, and it being the general opinion that there is no return for the person sent, the hold thus established is tolerably complete. Still, cases occur of slaves whose misdeeds have been repeatedly punished, and whom their master wishes to get rid of; the master assembles a court of the chiefs, and the offender is sentenced to be deported to "Long Juju." He then proceeds on his journey, under the care of a juju-man, who, the natives affirm, conducts him, blindfolded and by a circuitous route, to the fatal spot. What eventually takes place has never been divulged, and the popular accounts have probably been spread by the chiefs to overawe their slaves. The supreme judge is said to be a priestess possessed of the power of knowing all things; when brought before her, the offender is merely told that he can depart; if guilty he becomes transfixed to the spot, and water gradually rises around him until he is submerged. Another version is that the place is situated on an island, and that the victim, on being handed over by his conductor, goes through some form of mock trial, always resulting in conviction, whereupon he is cast alive into a huge tank of boiling human blood. Juju-men stand round armed with two-edged swords, with which they hack the body to pieces and stir up the contents

¹ *I*vide page 306.

of the tank. But these tales are doubtless mythical, and the chiefs of the Niger Coast Protectorate now show every inclination to refer their cases to the Consular Courts, so that "Long Juju," with its terrors, is rapidly passing into disuse.

Before concluding this sketch of the religion of the pagans, we must say something about the very marked traces of totemism which are found in West Africa. In nearly every tribe there are individuals who belong to a clan named after an animal or plant; this is not universal—that is to say, it is not the rule that each member of a tribe possesses such a distinctive appellation, but in one tribe there may be found two or three men with a surname of Leopard, Dog, Crocodile, or the like, and the Leopards, &c., of one tribe would claim with those of another tribe common descent from an original Leopard. The Leopard becomes the badge or crest of the clan, and the animal itself is sacred to every member of the clan,¹ its flesh being forbidden to be eaten. The more common names of these clans are the Leopard, Buffalo, Dog, Crocodile, Bush-cat, Monkey, Lion, Snake, Iguana, Parrot, Plantain, Corn-Stalk, and Palm-tree. In some few instances the people claim direct descent from the actual animal or plant whose name they bear, but this true totemism is the exception among the West Africans, for the names are usually accounted for by the supposition that some ancestor received the nickname of a certain animal or plant, and that his descendants retained the same. It is only natural that in the course of time uncivilized people who bear the name of a particular animal and its effigy as their badge should come to regard the actual animal as their special care, and it is more than probable that where such things as snakes and iguanas are held sacred, or where certain plants are forbidden to be eaten, there are to be found powerful parties belonging to the

¹ Vide *Up the Niger*, p. 309.

Snake and Iguana clan, or bearing the name of the forbidden plants.

From a perusal of the geographical description contained in previous chapters, the reader will have already grasped the fact that West Africa, from a religious point, has a tolerably clear boundary-line marking the limits of Mohammedanism. The line, perhaps, is not drawn as regularly as that defining the sphere of influence of a Power, but nevertheless, if we look at the map, we can lay down with fair accuracy the sphere of influence of Islam and of heathendom. We know, from the accounts of the Fulah proselytizing wave, how vast regions of West Africa originally peopled by pagans have become a hot-bed of Mohammedans; what we now propose to discuss is the result—whether it has been beneficial or otherwise to the natives. When treating of such matters it is difficult for the Christian to forget for the time the peculiar circumstances of the case, and as the religious question has usually been dealt with by more or less biassed members of the Church of England, even those who have striven to be impartial have, perhaps unwittingly, been inclined to minimize the good work done among the pagans by Mohammedans. Before, however, entering into the matter of Mohammedan influence, a better understanding of the state of affairs will be arrived at by a brief mention of the general doctrines and tenets of Islam.

Mohammed was born at Mecca, A.D. 571, of poor parents belonging to the Koreish tribe, and until the age of forty led a simple and uneventful life. He then retired, for the purpose of spending a period in prayer and meditation, to a cave within a few miles of his native town, and whilst there he received what he considered to be a revelation and a call from God to go out into the world and make known the true religion. The faith which he commenced to preach was what he termed the “religion of Abraham,” who, he maintained,

was one of the principal prophets chosen by God, the others being Adam, Noah, Jesus, and himself. The Arabs amongst whom he dwelt were pagans, though in the country there were to be found colonies of Jews and Christians, and with the "religion of Abraham" Mohammed assimilated such pagan customs as he deemed harmless, and much of the religion of the Jews and Christians. The doctrines which he preached were such as no Christian can find fault with ; he enjoined prayer, fasting, charity, and the living of holy lives ; he forbade the making of images, gambling, and drinking ; and he counselled all men to be kind to dumb animals and merciful to the weak. Christ he considered, like himself, a prophet sent by God to minister to the people, but he held Him in high esteem, and continually spoke of the miracles which he believed Him to have worked. So far in its main principles Mohammedanism differed little from Christianity, the point of variance being that Mohammed acknowledged Christ to be no more than a prophet, which is epitomized in the verse of the Koran, "They surely are infidels who say that God is the third of three, for there is no God but one God."

Henceforth and for several years Mohammed's life was one of continuous preaching ; he gained many followers, but made many enemies, and, like Christ, suffered severe persecution. He was forced to leave Mecca, and eventually (A.D. 622) fled to Medina, where he was received as Prophet, Priest, and King. From the year of the Flight Mohammedans date their history, and with his entry into Medina their Prophet commenced a new life ; he was no longer "the preacher of a creed beautiful and simple," but the founder of a relentless bigotry upheld by the sword—conversion or death being the new teaching. He waged war on Arabs, Jews, and Christians in the name of Islam, and so successful was he as a warrior that within ten years he had conquered the whole of

Arabia and spread his doctrines far and wide. At the age of sixty-one (A.D. 632) Mohammed died, to the grief of all his followers, who had firmly believed him to be immortal, but his name and his green flag remained to appeal to the faithful, and even to this day their power is fully maintained.¹ The student of the Koran will find in it much that is entirely in accord with Christianity; its language is certainly not wanting in style—in fact, many of the passages are very beautiful; and even the Christian must acknowledge that as a religious work it is second only to the Bible. One verse only we will quote, though the Koran contains scores of equally fine passages: “There is no piety in turning your faces towards the east or the west, but he is pious who believeth in God, and the last day, and the angels, and the Scriptures, and the prophets; who for the love of God disburseth his wealth to his kindred, and to the orphans, and to the needy, and the wayfarer, and those who ask, and for ransoming; who observeth prayer, and payeth the legal alms, and who is of those who are faithful to their engagements when they have engaged in them, and patient under ills and hardships and in time of trouble; these are they who are just, and these are they who fear the Lord.”

As first preached by the Prophet, Islam was undoubtedly a pure, charitable, and good religion; but later in life, when the man of peace took up arms for the Faith, and commanded the wholesale slaughter of unbelievers, charity disappeared, though it must be admitted that in the Old Testament are to be found ample proofs of the recognition of the justice of warfare in the name of religion. Without, however, entering into a theological discussion, we would point out that between

¹ The Mohammedan population of the world is now estimated at upwards of one hundred and fifty millions.

Mohammedanism as originally taught by its founder and that of to-day there is a wide difference; purity and charity are now conspicuous by their absence, and in their places have arisen bigotry and fanaticism. Still, there is much that is good in the teachings of the Mohammedans, and as far as Africa is concerned, Islam is certainly better for the welfare of the natives than the wretched state of paganism which we have described in the earlier pages of this chapter. "When," says Mr. Clodd,¹ "we hear good-meaning people lament that negroes should become Mohammedans, let us remember that this was not the feeling of Jesus when His disciples told Him that they had forbidden a man who was casting out demons in His name. 'And Jesus said, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.' And this, I am sure, He would say to-day of the Mohammedan missionaries if He were amongst us." We do not at all pretend to maintain that Mohammedan influence is wholly beneficial to the pagan Africans, for we have had frequent occasion to abuse their slave-raiding propensities, but it is impossible to deny that in the scale of civilization the Mohammedan is far above the pagan. The Rev. C. H. Robinson, who is no supporter of African Mohammedanism, says, "In the comparatively few cases in which it has succeeded in gaining an influence over cannibals and degraded savages, it has undoubtedly raised them to a much higher level of civilization, and it has done this more rapidly perhaps than Christianity would have done it."² Again, we have the evidence of the French explorer Monteil, who, in setting forth the advantages of Islam over heathendom, claims for the Mohammedans that their habits are productive of health, that they are not habitual drunkards, that they have no human sacrifices and other barbarous customs, that

¹ *The Childhood of Religions*, by Edward Clodd, New Edition, 1891.

² *Mohammedanism: Has it any Future?*

they have notions of equality before God, and temper justice with mercy. On the other hand, evidence is not wanting to disprove some of Monteil's assertions. Another French traveller, Binger, although an upholder of Islam in West Africa, says of the Fulahs, "All are Mohammedans without exception, and all are drunken in the fullest acceptance of the word. Towards five o'clock in the evening it is no longer possible to have a serious conversation with them—young people, adults, and old men, are all drunk."¹ Lugard also is a witness against the Mohammedans: "Over vast areas of West Africa," he writes, "Mohammedanism has become so deteriorated by intemperance that its influence for good has been largely discounted. The Mohammedan negro is inflated with a sense of his superiority, which has taught him a supreme contempt for human life outside the pale of his own creed."

But even acknowledging that the Mohammedans of West Africa are intemperate, that they are inveterate slave-raiders and oppressors of the pagans, and that they are somewhat lax in their morals, the fact remains that the countries over which they rule are more prosperous than the lands of the independent pagans, and the people far pleasanter to deal with. The Mohammedan of West Africa is not such a rabid fanatic as his co-religionists of certain other parts of the world, and he is by no means averse to intercourse with Europeans. The Hausa Constabulary, with which England holds her West African possessions, is composed almost entirely of Mohammedans—not, of course, Fulahs, but Mohammedan negroes—and probably no more loyal body of men exists in the British Empire. But the Mohammedans of whom M. Binger and Colonel Lugard write are the Fulahs, whose

¹ This, we need hardly say, is a great exaggeration of the state of affairs.

century of conquest has produced in their natures a wild and careless mode of life bordering on profligacy and immorality ; with the higher classes matters are different, and the sultans, emirs, imams, and mallams are by no means deficient in enlightenment, or even culture. They have their vices, but for that matter so have European Christians, and if a strict inquiry could be made into the inner life of any of the large towns of the Western Soudan, in all probability the moral standard of the Fulahs would be found to be far higher than that of any of our own manufacturing towns.

Although the Mohammedans force their religion on those whom they conquer, yet they have other methods, and the Faith is widely preached by earnest missionaries, the converts thus made seldom afterwards forsaking Islam. There are many points in the Mohammedan doctrines which appeal to the pagan African far more readily than does Christianity. Slavery and polygamy, both natural to all Africans, is permitted by the Mohammedans, but forbidden by the Christians ; again, the preacher is like themselves, a black man and an inhabitant of their own country. All that the pagan has to give up on embracing Islam is the worship of his old gods and the heathen customs connected with them. In most cases he is only too willing to shake off the terrorism of the priesthood, knowing, as he does, that in his new faith he will be supported by Mohammedan arms. If there were no good in the creed of the Faithful, is it likely that it would have withstood the test of twelve centuries, and have spread far more rapidly than Christianity ? We are not decrying Christianity, nor in any way supporting Mohammedanism against it, but there can be no two opinions as to the superiority of the Mohammedan over the pagan. If he could be certain that all the Mohammedan converts would eventually be re-converted to Christianity, then probably there would be no

more ardent supporter of the preacher of Islam than the Christian missionary.

Coming now to the matter of Christianity and Christian Missions in West Africa, we have before us a subject of the greatest interest and importance, and one offering a wide field for discussion. The principal societies which have established Protestant missions in this part of Africa are the Church Missionary Society (Sierra Leone, Yoruba, and the Niger), the Wesleyan Missionary Society (in all the British possessions), the Scotch United Presbyterians (Old Calabar), and the Basle Missionary Society (Gold Coast), while among the smaller societies and offshoots of the larger ones are the Sierra Leone Native Church (C.M.S.), United Methodist Free Churches, Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, and two American Societies. With regard to Roman Catholic missions, the chief representatives are the French, who still maintain stations on the Lower Niger and at a few other places, though their energies are now being chiefly directed to work within their own spheres of influence. The Church Missionary Society commenced operations among the Susus (north of Sierra Leone) in 1804,¹ among the Bulloms in 1812, and at other places near Sierra Leone in 1815. Owing, however, to the opposition of the natives in 1817 and the burning of the mission stations, members of the Society were forced to restrict their labours to Freetown, where the seeds of good work were sown among the colonies of liberated slaves. In 1827, the Fourah Bay Institution was established, one of the first students being the afterwards famous Samuel Crowther, Bishop of the Niger ; in 1840 the Society began a mission to the Timani people ; and since then it has lost no opportunity of breaking fresh ground wherever possible. In the Yoruba

¹ The English Baptists sent a mission to Sierra Leone in 1795, but nothing came of it.

country mission stations were established in 1846 at Abeokuta and other places, and, in 1852, at Lagos; while in the Niger Protectorate Lokoja was occupied in 1865, Bonny in 1866, Brass in 1868, and numerous other stations in subsequent years.

The Wesleyan Methodists followed the Church Missionary Society to Sierra Leone in 1811; opened a station at Bathurst (Gambia) in 1821, and at McCarthy's Island in 1831, developing rapidly, until in a few years all the more important places on the Gold Coast, Lagos, and the Yoruba interior were occupied. The Scotch United Presbyterians started work in Old Calabar in 1846, and have been content to confine their operations to the natives of this one district; while the Basle Mission, so well known for its good work in many parts of the world, commenced on the Gold Coast, and, in spite of severe trials,¹ has succeeded in maintaining a chain of stations from the coast to Kumassi.

From the above summary it will be seen that the amount of ground covered by the different societies is very considerable, and although it is quite impossible here to describe the step by step development of each society, there are certain matters connected with the Church in West Africa which demand explanation. The enormous mortality among the European missionaries at Sierra Leone—fifty-two deaths had occurred by 1825,—and the difficulty of getting sufficient volunteers for the work, gave the Church Missionary Society the idea of employing native converts for the purpose of spreading the Gospel, and, in 1827, the Fourah Bay College was started, with the object of training native agents. On the whole it may be said that the institution has proved a

¹ Messrs. Ramseyer and Kühne were kept in captivity by the Ashantis from 1869 to 1874. *Vide* pages 74, 82, 83, and 95.

great success,¹ and, having been affiliated, in 1876, to Durham University, students have since then been able to take their degree without the necessity of visiting England. The first name on the rolls of the College was, as we have said, that of Samuel Crowther, to whose excellent example has been due, in no small measure, the facility with which agents have always been forthcoming to labour among their fellow-countrymen. Samuel Crowther's life was a most remarkable one, and so intimately was it associated with the development of missions in West Africa that no account of the work of the Church Missionary Society in Africa would be complete without some allusion to the "dear old Bishop of the Niger."

In 1821, the Fulahs raided and destroyed the town of Oshogun, in Yorubaland, and amongst the captives carried off into slavery was a pagan woman with three children—a boy of eleven, and two girls. Adjai, the boy, was at once separated from the others, and bartered for a horse, but the bargain not proving satisfactory, he was after awhile returned. He was next sold at the slave-market at Ijaye, passed through the hands of four masters, and eventually became one of a slave-gang sold to a Portuguese slaving captain at Lagos. With one hundred and eighty other victims he was placed on board the slaver to commence the voyage across the Atlantic, but the day after leaving Lagos the ship was captured by H.M.S. *Myrmidon*, and its human cargo taken to Sierra Leone and set free. Adjai was placed under the care of the Mission schoolmaster at Bathurst, and proved himself so apt a pupil that, within six months, he had learned to read, and had been made a monitor in the school. He acquired also a

¹ "The college has been successful whenever it has had a competent principal; but it has at times had to be suspended for want of one, owing to sickness or death." *C.M.S. Atlas, Part I.* : 1896.

knowledge of carpentry and masonry, and, in 1825, on being baptized, he took the name of Samuel Crowther. In the following year he visited England, with the schoolmaster and his wife, and for some months attended the parish school at Islington; it was then decided that he should return to Sierra Leone to form one of the first batch of students at the new Fourah Bay College. Not long afterwards he was promoted to be an assistant teacher in the college, and, in 1829, he married a girl, who, like himself, had been captured and set free in childhood. From 1830 to 1834, he and his wife had charge of different mission schools, and in the latter year Samuel Crowther returned to the College as tutor, remaining there for nearly seven years. The Niger Expedition of 1841¹ gave the Church Missionary Society the opportunity of putting to the test the value of native agency, and Crowther was selected to accompany Mr. Schön, who formed such a high opinion of the young African that he recommended him to the Society for ordination. Accordingly, in 1842, the future bishop of the Niger was summoned to England, and, after undergoing a course of study at the Islington College, took holy orders at the hands of the Bishop of London on the 11th June, 1843—the first on the roll of Native African clergy.

Samuel Crowther's return to Africa was the occasion for great rejoicing among the Native Christians of Sierra Leone, but he was not destined to stay long with them, for, in 1845, he was deputed to assist the veteran Gollmer in founding the mission to the Yorubas. Thus the former slave boy, Adjai, returned to the land of his birth, and, strange to say, met his mother and sisters, whom he eventually converted to Christianity. For the next few years he laboured at Abeokuta, then visited England for the third time, and, in 1854, accompanied Dr. Baikie's expedition up the Niger

¹ *Ibid* page 151.

River.¹ In 1855, he was back again at Abeokuta, and the two following years he spent at Lagos, where he commenced to translate the Bible into the Yoruba language. Once more he accompanied Dr. Baikie to the Niger, when the wreck of the *Dayspring* and the enforced detention of its crew gave Crowther the opportunity of preaching the Gospel to the pagans and Mohammedans of the Middle Niger. From this time the Niger became his special care, and he soon had missions all along the banks of the river as far as the confluence.

On the 29th June, 1864, Samuel Crowther was consecrated first Bishop of the Niger Territories by Bishop Blomfield in Canterbury Cathedral, and continued his labours for the next twenty-seven years in the Niger Territories and in the Oil Rivers, dying at his post on the 31st December, 1891, respected and beloved by everyone. The creation, in 1864, of a Native Episcopate was never for a moment a cause for regret, though at the time it was considered a somewhat bold experiment, and so fully did Samuel Crowther justify the expectations that had been formed of him that it is not too much to say that the spread of Christianity on the West Coast of Africa is mainly due to the rescue in 1821 of the little slave-boy, Adjai.

To revert to Church matters at Sierra Leone, the original headquarters in West Africa of the Church Missionary Society: we have seen how the natives themselves were gradually attracted, chiefly by means of the Fourah Bay College, to the field of evangelism. The advantages of being able to train up and utilize the services of Africans were immense, for, owing to the deadly nature of the climate European missionaries were ever scarce, and could survive but a short residence on the Coast, which precluded their acquiring a thorough knowledge of the numerous native languages. Moreover, the influence

¹ *Vide* page 168.

exercised by a negro preaching to negroes was naturally far greater than that of a white man; the negro knew the ways of his fellow-countrymen, he could talk to them in their own language, whereas the European missionary who addressed his congregation by means of an interpreter was regarded with a certain amount of suspicion. The white man's God must be white, the simple pagan would argue, and could have no concern in the affairs of the black man; but to see a man of their own colour upholding the new faith gave them confidence. Gradually a Native Church was raised up at Sierra Leone, with well-ordered congregations and native ministers. It became self-supporting and self-ministering, and, as it grew, it aimed at higher things—the despatch of native evangelists into the heathen and Mohammedan countries. Native missions were rapidly established throughout West Africa, and the matter of superintendence became a great difficulty, it being impossible for the Bishop of Sierra Leone to look after such distant stations as, for instance, those in the Niger Territories. The *C.M. Intelligencer* of May, 1864, thus sums up the situation:—"The opportune moment appears to have arrived when the Native Church should be still further empowered to go forth, and, with a holy freedom, do the Lord's work in Africa, and as the Native Christian has been raised to the ministry, so the native ministry be permitted to culminate into a Native Episcopate."

Such, in brief, was the outcome of the Church Missionary Society's efforts in West Africa; and the Wesleyan and other Societies were at the same time doing equally good work. The heathen was attacked in all directions, and ministers, Bible-readers, and catechists were distributed throughout those regions which were at all inclined to receive them, until, now, wherever the British flag has been hoisted, there will be found the Mission station. The following figures show roughly the state of Christianity in British West Africa at the present time:—

BRITISH PROTESTANT MISSIONARY SOCIETIES IN WEST AFRICA.*

MISSIONARY SOCIETY AND DISTRICT.	No. of Stations.	Un-Blessings.	Missionaries, Pastors, Teachers, &c.					Native Christians.		Native Schools and Scholars.
			White.		Coloured.		Adherents.	Communicants.		
			Ordained.	Lay and Medical.	Female.	Ordained.			Lay.		Female.
CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY										
Sierra Leone (C.M.S.)	5		5	2	7	4	32	12	610	216
Do. Native Church	17			...		12	10	34	11,579	6,473
Yoruba (C.M.S.)	15		5	3	14	9	44	8	2,951	778
Do. Native Church	7		6	5	11	15	59	12	7,343	2,239
Niger	9					4	20	1	896	263
TOTAL	53		16	10	32	44	215	67	23,368	9,060
WESLEYAN-METHODIST M.S.										
Gambia	4	4	1			2	57	...	920	658
Sierra Leone	10	42	1			13	534	...	26,000	6,241
Gold Coast	14	111	5	5	...	23	1,289	1	34,272	7,004
Lagos	6	40	5			14	272	...	8,254	2,982
TOTAL	34	197	12	5		52	2,152	1	68,446	16,945
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN.										
Old Calabar	8	13	4	12		2	23	...	725	545
UNITED METHODISTS.										
Sierra Leone	5	3	8		...	...	3	...	4,108	2,802
S.P.G.—Sierra Leone	2		..	1	...	2	...	...	2,500	130
GRAND TOTAL	102	213	40	28	32	100	2,398	68	100,148	30,391
										317
										29,876

* Extracted from *Africa Waiting*; or *The Problem of Africa's Evangelization*, by Douglas M. Thornton. Third Edition. 1898.

Of Roman Catholic Missions and the Basle Mission we are unable to give any reliable statistics, though that their labours are not inferior to those of the other missions may be gathered from the school reports contained in the latest Blue Books of two of the colonies. Thus, the Basle Mission (Gold Coast) has thirty-three schools, with 2705 pupils, receiving an annual Government grant of £1013; the Roman Catholic Missions on the Gold Coast have sixteen schools, with 2014 pupils, receiving a grant of £770, and at Lagos they have 762 pupils in their schools. This matter of education is one of the principal objects of all the Missionary Societies in West Africa, and is undoubtedly a most satisfactory way of civilizing the people, and making them understand the superiority of Christianity over paganism. The more important of the chiefs, although they themselves may be unwilling to lose the power which they wield through the juju-man, are generally anxious that their children should attend the schools and acquire a good education, which may afterwards be turned to account for trading purposes. Religion is, of course, taught in these schools, and it is in the next generation that the results may be expected to show themselves to fuller advantage. The Basle Mission has always made a great point of teaching useful trades to the natives, and its industrial schools have done excellent service in turning out well-trained carpenters, coopers, and the like, who have no difficulty afterwards in finding remunerative employment. The other missions are now following this example, and the Church Missionary Society has established at Sierra Leone a Technical Institution, where trades are taught on scientific principles, and which cannot fail to prove of inestimable value to the natives.

This Society has also of late years recognized the fact that the people, especially in the more remote parts, are immensely impressed by any medical services which Europeans are able to render to them, and efforts are now being made to put in

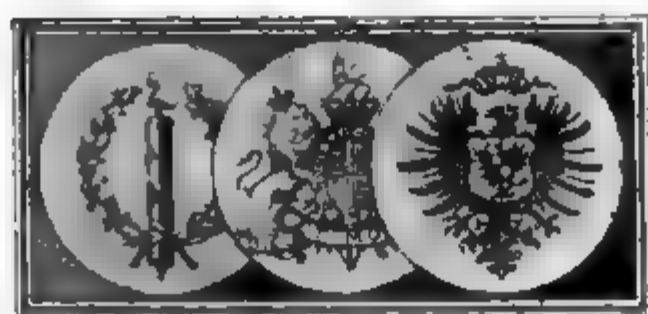
the field a certain number of qualified medical missionaries. In addition to this, foreign missionaries are encouraged to undergo a nine months' course of elementary medicine and surgery at the Livingstone College, Stratford, E., for the purpose of gaining sufficient knowledge to take care of themselves, and to be able to treat simple cases among the natives; while dispensaries are rapidly being established in connection with West African mission stations. All this is a move in the right direction, for it is quite certain that the healing of one negro will bring more converts to Christianity than the preaching of a score of sermons.¹ A knowledge of medicine, however slight, is looked on by the native as witchcraft; a cure effected is regarded as a miracle, and soon becomes noised abroad; the missionary is the hero of the hour, and the people begin to think that there must be some truth in what they have been told of the white man's God. In this respect the Mohammedan is as easily influenced as the pagan, for with all his vaunted superiority he has a firm belief in the efficacy of charms, as evidenced by the common cure for all ills. A *mullam* writes a verse of the Koran on a piece of paper, which is then washed in water, and the water administered to the patient. Thus, in all probability there is no more effectual method of approaching the Mohammedans of the Western Soudan than by the medium of medical missionaries, and the attempted evangelization of these Mohammedans is the great problem which Bishop Tugwell and the members of the Church Missionary Society are now endeavouring to solve.

The problem is of very great interest, for, as is well known, Christianity, in other parts of the world, makes little or no

¹ McWilliam wrote in 1841, "I feel confident that medicine and surgery, judiciously exercised, will form important elements in any endeavour to civilize the tribes on the banks of the Niger. The same will obtain, I believe, throughout Africa. The Africans have the most sacred confidence in the power of medicine. Medical practitioners are nowhere more respected."

way with Mohammedans. Here, however, it is claimed that circumstances are different; the majority of the Mohammedans are converts, and not in any way fanatical, and, therefore, it is thought, they will be likely to listen to Christian preachers. It is on the Hausas that the Soudan missionaries propose making a beginning, their language being widely spoken, and suitable for purposes of translation, and now that the country is being brought more under British control the danger of preaching against Islam (the punishment for which has hitherto been death) will be greatly minimized. That there are enormous difficulties to be overcome even the most sanguine supporters of this noble scheme will admit; the Mohammedan might, perhaps, be persuaded to substitute the Cross for the Crescent were he permitted to retain such social habits as he deems essential to his very existence—slave-holding and polygamy, for instance. Whether these things can be made to disappear like the cannibalism and human sacrifices of the pagans, or whether the influence of Christian missionaries will break up the old customs of the people, are matters which time alone can decide. Results must, therefore, be awaited with patience.





CHAPTER XXI.

FRANCE AND GERMANY IN WEST AFRICA.

THE West Coast of Africa at the present day resembles a huge estate that has been split up into building lots, with desirable frontages on to the Atlantic, and boundary fences running back on either side of each lot, but in many cases having no fence at the end of the back garden, and it is these back gardens (or hinterlands) and their limits that have become the cause of a certain amount of trouble. Let us see how the lots have been taken up—for there are now none left in the market between Cape Verd and the Cameroons—which is all the coast north of the Equator that concerns British interests. The various possessions in order are as follows: French Senegal (Senegambia), British Gambia, French Soudan, Portuguese Guinea, French Guinea, British Sierra Leone, the Republic of Liberia (independent), French Ivory Coast, British Gold Coast, German Togoland, French Dahomey, British Lagos, British Niger Protectorate, and German Cameroons; while Spain possesses the Island of Fernando Po, lying south of Old Calabar and West of the Cameroons. With independent Liberia and isolated Fernando Po we need not concern ourselves, and Portuguese Guinea may be dismissed in a few words. It is the last of the West African possessions remaining to the nation to whom belongs the honour of discovering the whole coast, and whose kings were at one time known as "Lords of Guinea." The colony is practically French, for the whole of the trade is in French

hands, and, though its area is put down as 14,000 square miles, not more than 50 square miles are actually in Portuguese occupation.

With regard to the position of the French in West Africa there is much to be said, and there is little doubt that their expanding policy during the present century, in this part of the world, has been not only very remarkable, but most detrimental to British trade. At the same time, we have only ourselves to blame, for even a quarter of a century ago, with a little foresight, we might have secured every market worth having in West Africa.¹ Still, the time for repining has gone by, and the Commission recently sitting in Paris has successfully settled the few points that remained in dispute. The boundaries between French territory and the British colonies of Gambia² and Sierra Leone,³ have been definitely fixed in all directions. Hemmed in and cut off from the interior by the French, these colonies must depend in future entirely on their own resources, and their situation has been aptly described as that of "a mouse in the jaws of a cat." The delimitation of the boundaries of the hinterlands of the Gold Coast, Lagos, and the Niger Protectorate, is the subject which lately engrossed the attention of the two nations concerned, but before entering into it, we will give the reader an idea of how the French managed to find their way into the immediate neighbourhood of our possessions. In

¹ McQueen wrote in 1821: "France is already established on the Senegal, and commands that river, and if the supineness and carelessness of Great Britain allow that powerful, enterprising, and ambitious rival to step before us and fix herself securely on the Niger, then it is evident that, with such a settlement in addition to her command of the Senegal, France will command all Northern Africa. The consequences cannot fail to be fatal to the best interests of this country, and by means surer than even by war and conquest, tend ultimately to bring ruin on our best tropical colonial establishment."

² *I*vide page 19.

³ *I*vide footnote, page 33.

Chapter XVIII. we sketched the advance of the French in pursuit of the will-o'-the-wisp, Samory, from Senegal towards the Upper Niger, and it will be remembered that, by 1881, they had pushed their advanced posts well forward, and had established themselves in the neighbourhood of the Upper Niger. But prior to 1881 they had already formed vast schemes for the appropriation of West Africa, and, as far back as 1863, reconnoitring expeditions had been despatched into the various native states bordering on the upper waters of the great river. The Franco-German war caused a temporary check to the advance, but, with the conclusion of peace, a desire to divert the minds of the people from internal troubles induced French statesmen to take up West Africa with redoubled energy. By 1876 the development of Senegal was the great colonial problem of the French Government, and three years later the construction of railways and the building of forts in the direction of the Upper Niger had commenced. The scheme was a gigantic one; France had three principal bases in Africa from which to push forward, viz. Algeria, Senegal,¹ and the French Congo, and by a simultaneous advance into the interior, she hoped to be able to eventually unite these three colonies, and convert the whole of West Africa (except, perhaps, a few little strips of coast line) into a huge French dependency.

The policy of Great Britain up to this time had practically been simply to hold on to what she possessed, without any idea of extending her possessions, with the result that France gradually crept round Gambia, obtained from the Portuguese a protectorate over the Futa Jallon country, formed a footing in what is termed the Rivières du Sud, and thus shut in Sierra Leone. Great Britain had been fully alive to these

¹ General Faidherbe had, many years before, planned the expansion of Senegal towards the Niger, but with little idea of joining hands with any other French colony.

events, as evidenced by the fact that in 1870 and 1876 she entered into negotiations with France as to the limits of the French advance in these regions. Nothing, however, came of these negotiations, and before anything was definitely arranged, the French had planned new bases on the West Coast.¹ On the Ivory Coast they already possessed two old settlements—Assinie and Grand Bassam—and, on the Slave Coast, Porto Novo;² these had long been neglected, but were now resuscitated, and later on expanded into very considerable colonies. The causes which precipitated this expansion we are now coming to.

In the summer of 1884 Germany swooped down on the Cameroons and Togoland, an event so startling that European Powers with claims in West Africa immediately set to work to increase their possessions right and left, so as to prevent the remainder of the country falling into the unyielding talons of the German Eagle. Thus Great Britain proclaimed the Niger Protectorate,³ and France, who had already become possessed of considerable territory on the banks of the Upper Niger above Timbuctoo, and had placed a gunboat on the river at Bamaku, strengthened her hold on the Ivory and Slave Coasts. In order to check this general "game of grab," the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 was assembled, where fourteen Powers met to discuss West Africa, and to lay down spheres of influence. The general arrangements arrived at were touched on at the beginning of this volume, but, in addition to the mutual agreements about spheres, it was decided that the Congo and the Niger should be opened to free navigation. So far as the latter river is concerned this

¹ By the Anglo-French convention, signed in 1882, a *modus vivendi* was arrived at between the two powers, but only as regards the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone.

² The French established themselves at Porto Novo about 1863, but soon abandoned it. The settlement was revived in 1883.

³ *Vide* page 194.

has become an important matter, for the French have more than once endeavoured to interpret the Act for their own purposes; thus, in 1892, the French gunboat *Ardent* passed up the Lower Niger fully laden with munitions of war, altogether contrary to the principles of free navigation as established by the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna, 1815, and as applied to the Niger by the Berlin Act. Free navigation as laid down by international law—for the Danube, the Niger, or any other river—means simply the free transit of vessels carrying merchandise, and for a foreign man-of-war to enter without permission a river flowing through the territory of another Power is a direct breach of law. In the case of the *Ardent*, however, the vessel did not ascend any great distance before she ran aground and became powerless, and representations having been made to the French Government, the usual reply was received—that the commander was acting without orders, and that he had been recalled. Another matter which has also been misinterpreted is that of free trade on the Niger, for whereas the Congo was opened to free trade as well as to free navigation, attempts were made to assert that the same applied to the Niger. A reference, however, to the Berlin Act at once shows the fallacy of this notion, freedom of navigation only being guaranteed.

To return to the sphere of influence arrangements of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885: broad lines of demarcation were laid down confining each European Power to certain districts (with foundations on the coast), within which that one Power alone had the right to extend its influence. This could be done by making treaties with the natives, and notifying the same to the other Powers, when the treaty-making Power was without further inquiry (or even examination of the treaties) regarded as the *de facto* suzerain. It is worthy of note, as bearing on later events, that Great Britain suggested that effective occupation should follow the

conclusion of a treaty, but France¹ dissenting, this was negatived except with regard to the actual coast regions, it being considered impossible to establish posts in the interior otherwise than by a very gradual advance. Between 1885 and 1889, various agreements were entered into between Great Britain, France, and Germany, and spheres of influence were more clearly defined; then followed, in 1889 and 1890, the two great agreements—the Anglo-German and the Anglo-French—by which all former agreements were ratified, and boundary matters placed, as far as then possible, on a sound footing. Leaving the Anglo-German agreements for the present, we will deal with the agreements between Great Britain and France as to their respective spheres in West Africa.

As the result of the *pourparlers* of the previous few years, an arrangement was signed in Paris on the 10th August, 1889. Article I. defined the boundaries between the British and French spheres in the neighbourhood of the Gambia; and Article II., those in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone. Then came the delimitation of the Gold Coast, contained in Article III., which ran as follows:—

On the Gold Coast the English frontier shall start from the sea coast at Newtown, at 1000 metres to the west of the house occupied in 1884 by the English Commissioners. It shall thence go straight to the Tendo Lagoon. The line shall then follow the left bank of that lagoon and of that of Ahly and the left bank of the River Tanoe, or Tendo, as far as Nougoua. Starting from Nougoua the frontier line shall be fixed in accordance with the various treaties which have respectively been concluded by the two Governments with the natives. This line shall be prolonged to the 9th degree of north latitude.

By Article IV. the boundary between Lagos and Porto Novo was defined:—

On the Slave Coast the line of demarcation between the spheres of influence of the two Powers shall be identical with the meridian

¹ At the instance of Baron de Courcel.

which intersects the territory of Porto Novo at the Ajarra Creek, leaving Pokrah, or Pokea, to the English colony of Lagos. It shall follow the above-mentioned meridian as far as the 9th degree of north latitude, where it shall stop. To the south it shall terminate on the sea-shore, after having passed through the territory of Appah, the capital of which shall continue to belong to England.

On the 5th August, 1890, were signed at London the "Declarations exchanged between the Government of Her Britannic Majesty and the Government of the French Republic," paragraph 2 of which dealt with the northern boundary of the Niger Territories:—

The Government of Her Britannic Majesty recognizes the sphere of influence of France to the south of her Mediterranean possessions up to a line from Say on the Niger to Baruwwa on Lake Tchad, drawn in such manner as to comprise in the sphere of action of the Niger Company all that fairly belongs to the kingdom of Sokoto; the line to be determined by the Commissioners to be appointed.

The state of affairs, therefore, as far as the British and French were concerned in August, 1890, may be summarized as follows:—The British Colonies of Gambia and Sierra Leone were practically cut off from the interior by French territory, and their coast limits were defined; the western boundary of the Gold Coast was fixed from the sea to as far as the 9th degree of north latitude, and the eastern boundary of Lagos to the same parallel; while the Say-Barua line separated the British Niger Protectorate from the French Mediterranean possessions. All this is clear enough as far as it goes; the extent of the hinterlands of Gambia and Sierra Leone had been definitely settled (except in the matter of a few minor details of survey); the northern limits of the hinterland of the Niger Protectorate had also been settled, and that of the other coast possessions up to the 9th parallel. About the limits eastward of the hinterland of French Senegal, the limits westward of the Niger Protectorate and Lagos Colony north of the 9th parallel, or about the northern

limits of the Gold Coast Colony, no arrangements had been made—for the reason that, at that time, the distance intervening between the advanced line of British posts and French posts was so great as to make it improbable that the question of more definite boundaries would arise for many years. With what rapidity this intervening distance has been covered we will now show.

By 1887, the French had reconnoitred the Upper Niger as far as Kabara, the port of Timbuctoo, and between 1888 and 1891 Colonel Archinard took Segu, conquered the Baniako tribes further down stream, and drove Samory out of his stronghold to the south. In the two following years Colonels Humbert and Combes continued the pursuit of Samory, while Archinard pushed forward towards Timbuctoo, capturing (April, 1893) the important town of Djenne, and establishing a military post there. A flotilla of gunboats now advanced down the river to Mopti, where a *depôt* was formed, and after some minor operations against Samory, Colonel Bonnier, who was now in command, decided on the capture of Timbuctoo. For this purpose he assembled his forces at Segu, and commenced the descent of the river on Christmas Day, 1893. In the meanwhile, however, Lieutenant Boiteux, who had been left in command of the flotilla at Mopti with strict injunctions not to advance towards Timbuctoo, conceived the idea of gaining for himself the honour of seizing the great prize. Accordingly, he steamed down to Timbuctoo, landed his dozen rifles, and, after exchanging a few shots, hoisted the tricolour in the city on Christmas Day, when Bonnier and his force were still three hundred miles away. The audacity of this undertaking was astounding, but on the arrival of his superior on the 10th January, 1894, the unfortunate Boiteux was severely reprimanded, and awarded forty-five days' simple arrest. Thus, by 1894, the French were in possession of Timbuctoo, and

though they suffered severely from time to time at the hands of the surrounding Tuareg tribes, they succeeded in holding the "Mysterious City," which had so long been their objective.

While all this was going on, the French were busy elsewhere, striving to extend their influence both by organized military expeditions and by duly accredited individual emissaries. The ostensible object of the military expeditions was the overthrow of Samory, and his occasional repulse or voluntary retirement naturally led to the advance of the French, and the establishment of posts to protect their lines of communication. Speaking first of the individual emissaries we will mention two—Monteil and Mizon; the former making a very remarkable journey, and proving himself worthy of having his name added to the long roll of African explorers. The action of the French Government in despatching these men to the British Niger Territories we need not here discuss, and whether the results of their reconnaissances (to use a temperate expression) were considered by their employers as satisfactory the world has yet to discover. No sooner was the agreement of 1890 signed than Monteil started from Senegal, with an escort of ten Toucouleurs, to reconnoitre the Say-Barua line. What his instructions were we cannot definitely tell, though it is fair to presume from his subsequent promotion that he carried them out to the letter, and the account of his travels which he afterwards published¹ discloses sufficient to enable us to arrive at the true nature of his mission. Commencing his journey on the 20th August, 1890, he went to Kayes by steamer, and thence marched to Segou, the French outpost. From Segou he traversed the whole bend of the Niger (hitherto unexplored by Europeans), and eight months later struck the Niger at Say. He next visited Sokoto and Kano,

¹ *De Saint Louis à Tripoli, par le lac Tchad.*

and eventually reached Kuka, whence he passed (1892), *via* Bilma, to Murzuk and Tripoli. Now for the object of his mission: The agreement of 1890 had said that the Say-Barua line was to be "drawn in such a manner as to comprise in the sphere of action of the Royal Niger Company all that fairly belongs to the kingdom of Sokoto"; the reason for this latitude being principally the doubt that existed as to whether Air (or Asben), lying considerably to the north of the line, was still tributary to Sokoto. Had Monteil travelled direct to Air to institute his inquiries there would be little more to be said, but, as a matter of fact, he never went north of the Say-Barua line, and what he did was to endeavour to make treaties in the name of the "Emperor of the French" with all those chiefs who had already concluded treaties with the Royal Niger Company. He commenced with the Sultan of Sokoto, whose treaty with the Niger Company, he was fully aware, formed the basis of the whole agreement of 1890, and who he also knew was heavily subsidized by the Company; he ended with the Sultan of Bornu, who was similarly situated, and throughout his book he goes out of the way on all occasions to abuse and sneer at the British officials who had been before him. We are not now entering into the question of the validity of treaties, but as the reader may wonder how a chief, already subsidized by, and under treaty obligations to, one Power could conclude a second treaty with an agent of another Power, we will say that possibly in the case of minor chiefs greed might induce them to perjure themselves. With men like the Sultan of Sokoto such a thing would be most improbable, and, in fact, he has since denied having had any dealings with the French. Mr. Wallace, who conveyed, in 1894, the annual subsidy to the sultan, took with him a Hausa translation of a paragraph in the *Temps*, stating that Monteil had concluded a treaty between France and Sokoto,

and on this being shown to the sultan's grand vizier, the latter wrote an autograph letter in which he affirmed that the French statements were absolutely false in every particular.

With regard to M. Mizon, the story is an even more unpleasant one, and since he appears to have been a man devoid of all tact, his mission proved of very doubtful benefit to France. Mizon entered the Lower Niger in a steam launch in 1890 by the Forcados mouth, and within a few days was attacked by the lawless Patani tribes on the banks of the Wari, an event which gave him his first opportunity of forwarding to Paris charges against the officials of the Royal Niger Company, whom he openly accused of instigating the natives to murder him. Rescued by the Niger Company from the Patanis, he proceeded on his voyage up the Benué River, with the undisguised intention of establishing French influence in the kingdom of Adamawa, which at that time was acknowledged to be within the spheres of Great Britain and Germany. The marvellous tales which he related on his return home made him a popular hero, and his popularity increased with each fresh accusation of perfidy that he brought forward against the Niger Company—so much so that, in 1892, the French Government decided to send him on a further mission to Adamawa. The arrangements made for this new venture were so extraordinary that we will give them in detail:—

A large sum of money—to which the State contributed—was raised to enable him to return to the Niger, and a formal demand was made by the French Government that the Niger Company should allow him to carry through its territories the following munitions of war, viz. two mountain guns, with ordinary shell, grape, and canister, a quick-firing Hotchkiss cannon, 150 rifles with 18,000 cartridges, and 100 revolvers with 15,000 cartridges. The Company protested earnestly against this extraordinary demand on three grounds:—

(1) That the passage of such large munitions of war into the inte-

rior of Africa, under the charge of an uncontrolled adventurer, would be a distinct breach of the European agreement known as the Brussels Act, and would be calculated to do great mischief to the native populations beyond the territories of the Company.

(2) That M. Mizon, having expressly declared and claimed credit for his intention to prevent the extension of the British and German spheres, it would be, on the one hand, unpatriotic, and, on the other hand, unfair to a friendly power to facilitate such an aggressive expedition.

(3) That as the Company had displeased several Mohammedan emirs in the British sphere, through having steadfastly refused to furnish them with a single rifle or cartridge to assist them in carrying on their slave raids on the neighbouring pagan tribes, and through having also forcibly prevented such raids, it would be most impolitic to allow M. Mizon to present himself to these emirs as an ally with cannon, rifles, and a large supply of ammunition.

Unfortunately, at that moment (August, 1892), there was, for practical purposes, no Ministry in Great Britain, while the French Government was carried off its feet by a passing wave of popular enthusiasm. The vehement protests of the Company were, therefore, of no avail, and M. Mizon returned to the Niger and Benué in September last with six French companions, an Arab attendant named Hamed, and a large force of sharpshooters from Senegal. The foresight of the Niger Company, founded on experience of M. Mizon's character and methods, has been fully justified, as shown by the evidence of M. Mizon's French companions.¹

Unfortunately for M. Mizon he fell out with his officers, and one of them (the doctor of the expedition) left him and returned to France, where he at once reported to his Government the true state of affairs—how his late commanding officer, in order to make treaties and ingratiate himself with the Mohammedans of the Muri province of Sokoto, was assisting them, with French arms, to raid the pagans on all sides. The newspapers at first regarded these statements as an exaggeration actuated by personal animus against M. Mizon, but a second officer of the expedition shortly arrived to corroborate the statements, and French opinion changed.

¹ From a notice in the *Times* (June, 1893) of *French Slave Raiding in British Territory*.

“Mizon went to Africa,” said a French newspaper of the day, “to make French influence penetrate there. He has compromised it. He has allied himself with the Moslems against the pagans, whom the more practical English have always taken care to protect. Let us hope that the Ministry will take measures to withdraw from Mizon’s authority his unfortunate subordinates, and to recompense as it merits his extraordinary conduct.” We have, however, said enough to show the methods adopted by these French agents, and it is not difficult to see with what objects they were despatched on their missions. Monteil, it was hoped, would be able to cut down the limits of the kingdom of Sokoto, while Mizon at the same time paved the way for the expansion of the French Congo towards Lake Chad.

Reverting to the military expeditions: everyone must admire the immense energy displayed by France in the attempt to secure for herself a new empire in West Africa. Rapidly she advanced across the bend of the Niger, and had already followed the Sofas into what Great Britain considered to be the hinterland of the Gold Coast (i.e. the country north of Ashanti). In this way she was able to connect Senegal with the Ivory Coast, and probably at the close of 1892, the most ambitious of her statesmen imagined that, since Timbuctoo was about to be captured, when French influence would practically extend from Algeria to the Ivory Coast, the limits of their dream had been realized. But, an unexpected development occurring in 1893, a fresh scheme was immediately set on foot. French influence in the neighbourhood of Porto Novo had been progressing during the past few years, and, in 1892, the King of Dahomey had been brought to book. This was followed by the conquest of his kingdom, and almost at the same moment that Timbuctoo was taken, a French protectorate was proclaimed over Dahomey. Here, then, was another base from which to advance into the

interior; Dahomey, said the French, is entitled to its hinterland like any other coast possession, and there is no reason why the hinterland should not be coterminous with the hinterland of Algeria on the north, and with that of Senegal on the west. True, Germany might raise objections to the curtailment of her Togo hinterland, and Great Britain might protest, but Great Britain was always amenable to reason, or at any rate, could be "bounced" out of any claims she might put forward. So matters stood at the beginning of 1893, and the French had no sooner laid their plans than they commenced to put them into action. Samory was again stated to be the objective of the expeditions advancing eastward across the Gold Coast hinterland, and northwards from Dahomey. The great scheme had meanwhile developed very considerably—it was, in fact, doubtful whether France had not designs on the kingdom of Sokoto itself. Be that as it may, by 1894 Monteil was marching on Kong with 1500 men, while no less than four expeditions were concentrating on Borgu, viz. those commanded by Captain Decœur, Captain Toutée, Lieutenant Baud, and M. Albi (Administrator of Dahomey). Considering that in 1890 the Royal Niger Company had concluded a treaty with the King of Borgu, and with the King of Gurma to the north, and that the existence of these treaties was well known in France, the news that the French Government was about to despatch a powerful expedition under Captain Decœur to make treaties with Borgu, was received in England with considerable surprise. Although fully satisfied as to the validity of the Borgu treaties of 1890, the Niger Company determined to checkmate Captain Decœur, and the sequel is interesting. Captain Decœur's expedition left France for Dahomey on the 24th July, 1894; four days later Captain Lugard left England. It was, as the Paris papers said, a "veritable

steepchase," but it was won on the 10th November by Captain Lugard, who made a treaty with the King of Nikki, and left the place on his return journey five days before Decœur put in an appearance. The reason the French gave for initiating this race, was that the chief with whom the Niger Company had concluded their 1890 treaty was not the acknowledged King of Borgu; the King of Nikki was, they said, the real ruler of all Borgu, and it is interesting to note that Decœur and Albi returned from Nikki in the belief that they had been successful in making a valid treaty.

The case of Captain Toutée is somewhat remarkable, and certainly throws a flood of light on French methods. The first that was heard of him was an application made on his behalf to the Royal Niger Company to grant him a free passage to Boussa, since he was desirous, as a private individual, of proceeding to the French outposts in the neighbourhood of Timbuctoo. How he changed his *rôle* from private individual to political agent history does not relate, but his next appearance was as head of a French expedition that established a fort on the right bank of the Middle Niger in Boussa territory, and opposite to Bajibo on the left bank (in Sokoto territory). This raid into British territory was protested against, and the French Government ordered Toutée to withdraw. Meanwhile other French expeditions had entered Borgu, but these were travelling expeditions for treaty making, and, by the close of 1895, all had withdrawn to Dahomey, when, for a whole year, no French representatives were to be found in Borgu. Twelve months later, however, the preparations of the Niger Company for the Nupé and Ilorin war gave the French colonial party an opportunity of inducing France to disregard all previous agreements by a renewed invasion of Borgu, and to propound the theory (which in 1885, we may remark, she had refused to entertain) that treaties

must be followed by effective occupation. The dangers attending such a course, where any dispute as to boundaries exists, are enormous, and a knowledge of the situation of the French and British posts in West Africa in the spring of 1898, speaks volumes for the discipline which the subordinate officers were able to maintain among the native troops of the two rival powers. In some instances, as we shall see, the Union Jack and the Tricolour floated from the walls of the same town; the garrisons were quartered side by side, yet nothing of even an unfriendly nature was ever heard. Both sides awaited the decision of the Commission sitting in Paris—a situation as extraordinary as any in the annals of history.

Let us now see how the British and French posts stood at this time, not only as regards Borgu, but also as to the hinterland of the Gold Coast. South of the 9th parallel the boundaries of the respective spheres were made clear enough by the agreement of 1889, and the country that was in dispute lay between this parallel and a line drawn from Segou to Say (about $13^{\circ} 30'$ N.), while a line continued due north from the meridian of Newtown to meet the Segou-Say line formed the western limit, and the course of the Niger from Say to Jebba formed the eastern limit of the debatable ground. Within this area (with the exception of the neutral rectangle to which we shall refer presently) both Great Britain and France had a series of fortified posts, though no British posts had been established north of the 11th parallel. We need, therefore, only mention the posts that were occupied by British and French troops between the 9th and 11th parallels. Enumerating these from west to east, we find that they were as follows: British—Bosunu, Wa, Nasa, Yarida, Walwale, Gambaga, Bawku, Borea, Okuta, Bere, Ilesha, Leaba, Fort Goldie,

Jebba; French—Wa, Tumu, Kountum, Oako, Bofilo, Kiri-kiri, Bassila, Manigri, Semere, Wangara, Birimi, Kuandi, Wari, Bori, Banikoro, Kandi, Sori, Bui, Nikki, Shori, Borea, Paraku, Kishi, Keama, Boussa, Lafagon. These posts were for the most part in successive lines, and in no case had the French line of posts been pushed through the British line of posts, though the respective lines were in touch at Wa on the west, and at Borea on the east. Between the 11th parallel and the Segu-Say line, the French had about a dozen posts—all situated in territory claimed by Great Britain by right of treaties, to which matter we are now coming.

African treaties may, perhaps, in many instances, be of doubtful value, still the Powers assembled at the Berlin Conference of 1885, agreed to abide by them and not to question their validity when the fact of their having been entered into should be made known by one Power to the others. Presumably, therefore, if Great Britain concluded treaties with the native chiefs whose territories lay within what could be reasonably considered to be the British sphere of influence, those treaties, on being communicated to the other Powers, would give Great Britain an effective claim to the territories, and any attempt on the part of another Power to make later treaties with the same chiefs would be (not to speak too strongly) contrary to the comity of nations. But, as in the absence of treaties there could be no claim to territory, and as with the fall of Dahomey, France commenced a new scheme of colonial expansion, she set to work to make treaties throughout the previously mentioned debatable hinterlands. The worth of these treaties was, doubtless, discussed fully by the Paris Commission, but about their priority there could have been no question, as the following list will show :—

PRINCIPAL TREATIES CONCLUDED BY GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE.

TREATIES.	DATE OF SIGNATURE.	
	BRITISH.	FRENCH.
Wa . . .	1894 and 1897.	1895.
Yarida . . .	31st July, 1892.	24th April, 1895.
Gambaga . . .	28th May, 1894.	18th April, 1895.
Sansane Mangu . . .	8th August, 1894.	28th January, 1895.
Nikki . . .	10th November, 1894.	26th November, 1894.
Kishi . . .	13th October, 1894.	1st February, 1895.
Kiama . . .	22nd October, 1894.	11th February, 1895.
Boussa . . .	12th November, 1885, and 20th January, 1890.	3rd July, 1895.
Mossi Kingdom . . .	2nd July, 1894.	
Wagadugu . . .	2nd July, 1894.	
Leo . . .	6th February, 1897.	
Tumu . . .	6th February, 1897.	
Dasima . . .	1897.	
Dawkita . . .	1897.	
Buna . . .	1894.	
Baule . . .	1892.	
Busunu . . .	5th October, 1894.	
Daboya . . .	1892 and 1894.	
Trugu . . .	1892 and 1894.	
Salaga . . .	1st September, 1894.	
Gando Sultanate . . .	18th June, 1885.	
Gando . . .	1885, 1890, 1894.	
Borgu Kingdom . . .	1890.	
Sokoto Empire . . .	1885 and 1890.	
Sati . . .	. . . . .	9th September, 1896.
Fada Ngurma . . .	. . . . .	20th January, 1895.
Botu . . .	. . . . .	20th January, 1895.
Say . . .	. . . . .	1895.
Ilo . . .	. . . . .	19th February, 1895.
Bue . . .	. . . . .	9th February, 1895.
Kandi . . .	. . . . .	12th August, 1895.
Wari . . .	. . . . .	21st December, 1894.

A comparison of this list of treaties with the list of military posts as recently occupied establishes two interesting facts, viz. that Great Britain occupied no post where France

had priority in the matter of treaties (because wherever double treaties had been concluded, the British treaties were the first signed), and that France occupied numerous places whose chiefs had made treaties with no other Power than Great Britain. About the priority of these treaties there is no more to be said, and although, from the fact that the British Government had carefully examined and ratified all the treaties concluded by the Royal Niger Company on behalf of Great Britain, their validity might have been considered beyond question, the French Government appeared to think otherwise. To dispose of this point, we will quote the wording of the more important clauses of a typical treaty—that concluded between the Royal Niger Company and Borgu in 1890.

“We the Emir and chiefs of Boussa (or Borgu), in council assembled, representing our country, its dependencies, and tributaries on both banks of the River Niger and as far back as our dominion extends, in accordance with our laws and customs do hereby agree, on behalf of ourselves and our successors for ever.

“To grant to the Company full and absolute jurisdiction over all foreigners to our territories—that is to say, over all persons within the territories who are not our native-born subjects. Such jurisdiction shall include the right of protection of such foreigners, of taxation of such foreigners, criminal and civil jurisdiction over such foreigners.

“That we will not at any time whatever cede any part of our territories to any other person or State, or enter into any agreement, treaty, or arrangement with any foreign Government except through and with the consent of the Company, or, if the Company should at any time so desire, with the consent of the Government of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India.

“To place our territories if and when called upon under the protection of the flag of Great Britain.”

All the British treaties were in similar form, and clear and definite in every particular; to deny their value was hopeless, so all that France could assert was that the chiefs who signed away their kingdoms were not what they professed to be. Defeated, however, by the conclusion of fresh treaties with their own acknowledged chiefs, the French took up the new

line of effective occupation, to which we have already referred.

The principal territory in dispute was this kingdom of Borgu, and the reason is not far to seek; France desired access to the navigable waters of the Middle Niger and an outlet to the sea, which, until the Dahomey railway reaches the interior, and that from Senegal is extended eastward, would be of immense advantage to her commerce. Until recently France had not grasped this fact, and she was under the impression that, with a little expenditure, it would be possible to get rid of the natural obstacles which impeded the navigation of the Middle Niger. The extent of these obstacles was not thoroughly understood; for, in place of the few miles of broken water, said to exist in the neighbourhood of Boussa, it was found by Lieutenant Hourst, who made a most remarkable voyage from Bamaku to the mouth of the Niger, that for a distance of almost a thousand miles above Boussa, the river was practically unnavigable for anything larger than a canoe. This, then, was the principal object which the French had in view in their forward movement in Borgu. Before concluding our remarks on the subject of treaties, there are a few details which we ought, perhaps, to lay before the reader. In the first place, by the term treaty, as we have used it, is implied in all cases one granting political rights to one or other of the contracting parties, and not a mere treaty of friendship and commerce. Secondly, in the case of the Niger Territories, all treaties concluded by the Royal Niger Company, and afterwards ratified by the British Government, are considered by International law as equivalent to treaties concluded by the Government itself. The extent of country north of Borgu over which the Niger Company had treaty rights is another matter that requires to be mentioned; for, from the tabulated list of treaties, it may not be quite clear that Great Britain had concluded treaties to the north of Say, whereas she could produce treaties made

in 1890,¹ covering both banks of the Niger for five hundred miles or more above that town, though, as a matter of fact, she had no wish to enforce a claim to this part of the river. The Say-Barua line was chosen by *France*, and Say was fixed on for the reason that it was situated on the right bank of the Niger; while to show what at the time (1890) was the popular French acceptance of the terms of the agreement, we may mention that the *République Française*, commenting on the agreement, said: "The line drawn from Say, on the Niger to Lake Tchad places the kingdoms of Borgu, Sokoto, and Bornu, the richest and most populous parts of the Soudan, within the spheres of the British possessions." This was endorsed by the *Journal des Débats*, the *Siècle*, and the *Temps*, while the latter paper published a map showing the British sphere as limited by a line from Say to Barua and by a line from Say to the Lagos boundary. Since then, however, affairs have changed, and the *Temps* of the 2nd March, 1898, averred that, from the 9th parallel to Say was a no-man's-land, belonging to the first comer—in French opinion, France.

We have perhaps said enough as to what constituted the British and French claims to these hinterlands when the Paris Commission assembled, but before dismissing the subject it will be interesting to sum up the main points which, so far as the public are aware, were *sub judice*. France claimed vast tracts of country to the north of the Gold Coast, and of Lagos Colony (1) as being hinterlands of Senegal and Dahomey; (2) by priority of valid treaties; (3) by right of effective occupation. She denied that the Say-Barua line was intended, in any way, to limit either Power to the west or east respectively of Say or of Barua; she refused to admit the treaties concluded by the Royal Niger Company until communicated to her by the

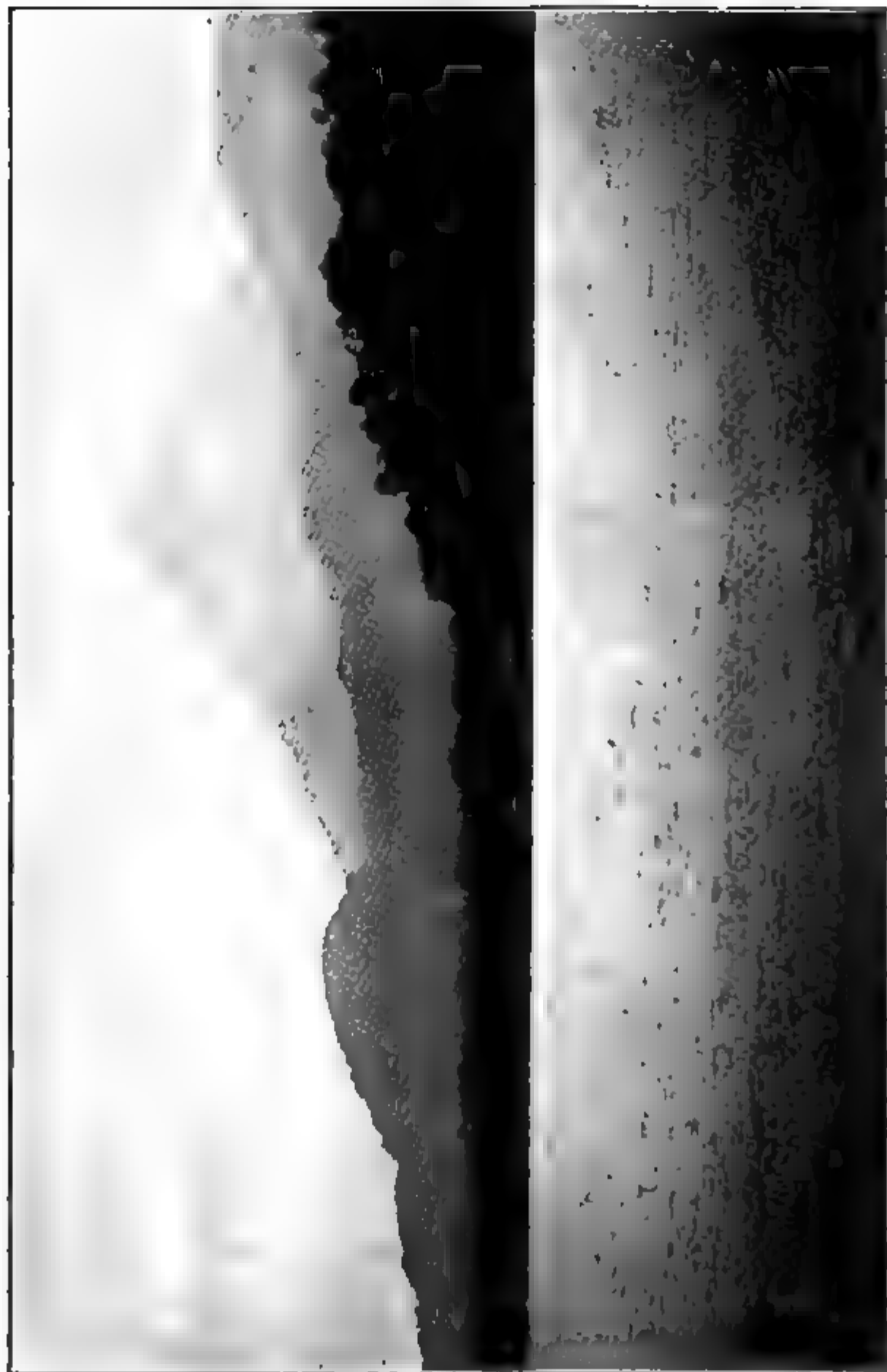
¹ At this date the French had no treaty rights farther down the river than Segu.

British Government ; and she demanded the examination and comparison of all treaties entered into by the two Powers with the same chief. Great Britain, on the other hand, claimed the same tracts of country (1) as being hinterlands of the Gold Coast and Lagos Colonies ; (2) by priority of valid treaties ; (3) by the duly communicated and duly proclaimed protectorate assumed (January, 1895) over all countries east of a line drawn from the Lagos Boundary to Say.¹ She refused to admit the doctrine of effective occupation as applying to any but the coast regions (Berlin Conference, 1885), and she put forward an indemnity claim on account of the British losses at Waima or Warina. The results of the Commission, which concluded its labours on the 14th June, 1898, must be considered satisfactory to both parties, and a study of the text of the Anglo-French Convention² signed on that date will show how the various claims have been amicably adjusted.

Coming now to the second part of the chapter—Germany, we have seen how she suddenly established protectorates over the Cameroons and Togo in 1884, prior to which date she had no possessions in West Africa. In the matter of the Cameroons, had the British Government paid attention to

¹ The Earl of Selborne, replying to a question in the House of Lords (March, 1898), said : “ Boussa and Nikki, which are in Borgu, have by Treaty accepted British protection. The British Protectorate over Borgu was formally notified to the French Government on the 1st January, 1895, and through informal communications the French Government had been aware of it for nearly three years before that date. Boussa was occupied by French troops in February, 1897, and Nikki in November, 1897. Her Majesty's Government have protested against these occupations. The King of Boussa has appealed for protection against the French. One of the points to be determined by the Commission now sitting in Paris is that as to the respective claims of Great Britain and France to the possession of Boussa and Nikki.”

² *Vide* Appendix to this volume.



AMBAS BAY, CAMEROONS.

[T. 1910 (page 100).

the advice of its Consuls at Fernando Po—Burton and others—who pointed out the value of this part of West Africa, the Union Jack would have been flying in the Cameroons half a century ago. No better illustration is to be found of the apathy displayed in past years by responsible Ministers concerning things African. In 1857, Captain F. A. Close, H.M.S. *Trident*, while in the Cameroons River, was requested by the natives to take over the country for Great Britain. “I was much surprised,” he says, “as there was no African land hunger in those days. The West Coast of Africa was looked on, not only as the refuge for the destitute white man, but as the white man’s grave, as it is now. Nevertheless, I sent the carpenter’s crew on shore to cut down a tree, and made a flagstaff, hoisted the British flag, and took possession, reporting it to the British Consul at Fernando Po.” The Consul apparently took no steps in the matter, as the country was never formally annexed. In 1864 much the same occurred again, the Commodore of the West African Squadron, at the request of the inhabitants, hoisting the British flag at Port Victoria, Ambas Bay. The step he had taken was reported to the Government by the Commodore, who, however, was told “to confine himself to the suppression of the Slave Trade, and not attempt the acquisition of Colonies.” It is easy to be wise now, but had a little wisdom been shown a few years ago, Great Britain would have been saved an immensity of trouble, and the map of Africa would be very different to what it is at the present day.

The spheres of influence assigned to Germany at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 were somewhat more definite than those assigned to Great Britain and France, and no great difficulty has arisen in the demarcation of boundaries, though lengthy negotiations and various agreements between Germany and Great Britain and between Germany and France have been necessary to complete everything satis-

factorily. The Anglo-German Agreement, signed at Berlin, July 1st, 1890,¹ ratified all former agreements, and defined the boundaries between the Gold Coast and Togoland, and the boundary between the Niger Protectorate and the Cameroons. Articles IV. and V. ran as follows :—

ARTICLE IV.

In West Africa :—

1. The boundary between the German protectorate of Togo and the British Gold Coast Colony commences on the coast at the marks set up after the negotiations between the Commissioners of the two countries of the 14th and 28th of July, 1886; and proceeds direct northwards to the 6° 10' parallel of north latitude; thence it runs along that parallel westwards till it reaches the left bank of the River Aka; ascends the mid-channel of that river to the 6° 20' parallel of north latitude; runs along that parallel westwards to the right bank of the River Dohawe or Showe; follows that bank of the river till it reaches the parallel corresponding with the point of confluence of the River Deine with the Volta; it runs along that parallel westward till it reaches the Volta; from that point it ascends the left bank of the Volta till it arrives at the neutral zone established by the Agreement of 1888, which commences at the confluence of the River Dakka with the Volta.

Each power engages to withdraw immediately after the conclusion of this Agreement all its officials and *employés* from territory which is assigned to the other Power by the above delimitation.

2. It having been proved to the satisfaction of the two Powers that no river exists on the Gulf of Guinea corresponding with that marked on maps as the Rio del Rey, to which reference was made in the Agreement of 1885, a provisional line of demarcation is adopted between the German sphere in the Cameroons and the adjoining British sphere, which, starting from the head of the Rio del Rey creek, goes direct to the point, about 9° 8' of east longitude, marked "Rapids" in the British Admiralty Chart.

ARTICLE V.

It is agreed that no treaty or agreement, made by or on behalf of either Power, to the north of the river Benué shall interfere with the free passage of goods of the other Power, without payment of transit dues, to and from the shores of Lake Chad.

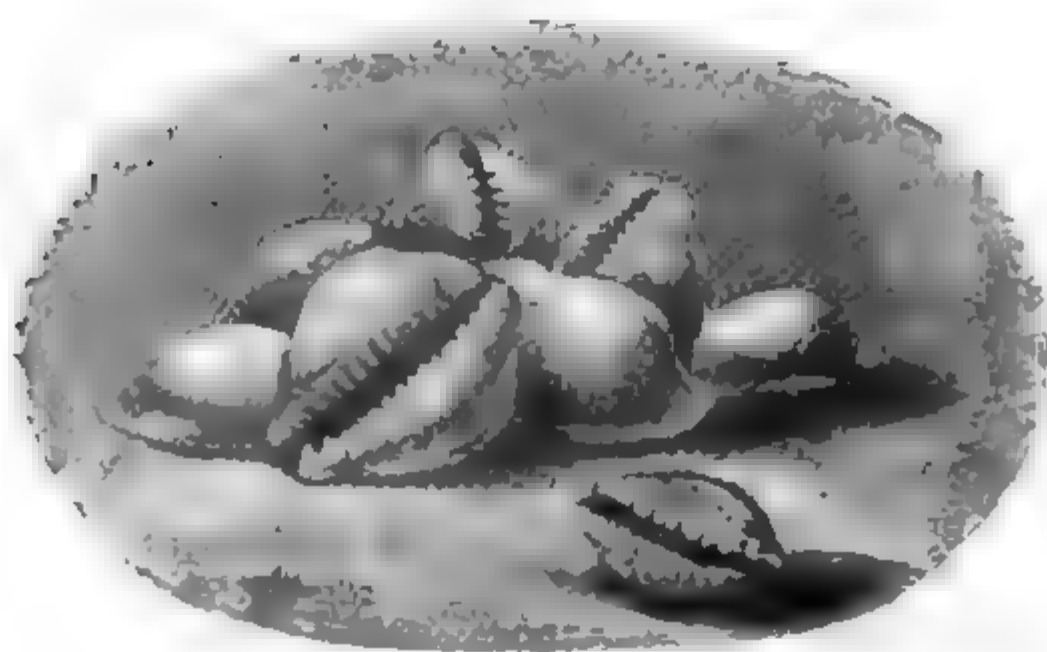
¹ By this agreement, it will be remembered, Germany recognized the British protectorate over the dominions of the Sultan of Zanzibar, and Great Britain ceded Heligoland to Germany.

All treaties made in territories intervening between the Benué and Lake Chad shall be notified by one Power to the other.

Regarding the neutral zone referred to in Article IV. 1, a special agreement was made in 1888 between Great Britain and Germany that neither power would attempt to establish an exclusive influence within this particular area, which may be described as a square tract of country situated between the eighth and tenth parallels and between about $0^{\circ} 40'$ E. and $1^{\circ} 30'$ W. In this neutral zone are two important commercial centres, Salaga and Yendi, whose trade Germany was anxious to attract to Togoland and Great Britain to the Gold Coast. This agreement still holds good, though the neutrality of the zone has been violated by both parties; for the Germans entered it from the east, attacked and burned Salaga, upon which the British pushed in from the west in 1894 and made treaties with Tongu and Salaga. Further negotiations have now, however, re-established the commercial neutrality of the zone, and such forces of the two Powers as had entered the territory in question have been mutually withdrawn. The boundary between the Gold Coast and Togoland south of this neutral zone to the sea (as agreed to in 1890) has remained unaltered, but a series of arrangements have been entered into as to the boundary between the Niger Protectorate and the hinterland of the Cameroons.

At the Berlin Conference (1885) the Anglo-German boundary was described roughly as running from the Rio del Rey to the Rapids on the Cross River; in 1886 this line was extended north-east to a point about thirty miles east of Yola on the Benué River, and finally, in 1893, a further extension of the boundary line was agreed to as follows:— From a point on the Benué thirty miles above Yola to the point where the thirteenth degree of longitude east of Greenwich is intersected by the tenth degree of north

latitude; thence to a point on the southern shore of Lake Chad situated thirty-five minutes east of the meridian of the centre of the town of Kuka, this being the distance between the meridian of Kuka and the fourteenth meridian east of Greenwich, measured on the map published by the German Kolonial Atlas of 1892. So far, therefore, as Anglo-German boundaries in West Africa are concerned, there seems to be little likelihood of trouble arising. By the Franco-German agreement of July, 1897, the spheres of those two Powers in the hinterlands of the Gold and Slave Coasts were clearly defined. The line starts from Little Popo on the coast and runs east along the channel of the lagoon to Grand Popo, thence it follows the course of the Mono River as far as the seventh parallel; from that point it is traced due north to the ninth parallel, passes slightly westward to the tenth parallel, then in an irregular line to the point where the eleventh parallel is intersected by the first degree of longitude east of Greenwich. This is the northern limit of the German sphere, the line thence following the eleventh parallel westward to the White Volta, whose course southwards to the neutral zone completes the boundary.





CHAPTER XXII.

WEST AFRICAN PRODUCTS.¹

IN this chapter we propose giving a brief description of the principal productions of the land (indigenous and cultivated), avoiding as much as possible all scientific terms, and arranging the material alphabetically for simplicity of reference.

ALOE, see FIBRE.

. **BAOBAB** (*Adansonia digitata*); Monkey Bread fruit, Ethiopian Sour Gourd, the *Kuka* of Bornu. A large tree, with thick trunk.² Widely distributed. The bark yields excellent fibre for paper-making, etc. Fruit acid with medicinal properties. It is in leaf and flower during the rains.

BENISEED (*Sesumum indicum*); gingelly, sesame. Cultivated for its seeds, which yield a plentiful oil, used for soap and as a substitute for olive oil. Grows to a height of about four feet; is cut and dried like hay, when the pods burst and the seeds are collected, washed, bleached, and the oil extracted by pressure. Largely exported. *Sesumum indicum* is known as black beniseed; white beniseed is a very similar plant, and is called scientifically

¹ Lindley and Moore's *Treasury of Botany*; Cooke's *Oil-seeds and Oil in the Indian Museum*; Kew *Bulletin*; Oliver's *Flora of Tropical Africa*; Hooker's *Niger Flora*; Moloney's *Forestry of West Africa*, etc.

² The trunk of the tree is often twenty or thirty feet in diameter, while the height seldom exceeds forty feet.

Polygala butyracea or *rurifolia*. Sells in the Liverpool market at about 15s. per cwt.

CALABAR BEAN (*Physostigma venenosum*); the Ordeal Bean, or *Eseré*, of Old Calabar. Large perennial climber.

CAMWOOD (*Baphia nitida*); Barwood. A shrub (indigenous) growing to a height of ten feet. The wood gives a deep red dye, much used by the natives to stain their bodies and for fetish purposes. Exported in large quantities to England in the form of logs (four feet long by one foot in diameter), and sells in Liverpool for about £15 per ton. Sierra Leone exports some 400 tons per annum.

CAPSICUM (*Capsicum annum*); chillies, red pepper. Low-growing annual. The ripe fruit is dried in the sun, and ground to powder. Smaller kinds are known as "bird-peppers." Largely cultivated, principally for local use. Small quantities of Sierra Leone chillies sell in Liverpool at about 37s. per cwt.

CASHEW NUTS (*Anacardium occidentale*). Indigenous tree, resembling a walnut. Nuts or seeds eaten roasted, and from them is extracted an oil similar to almond oil. Largely exported to Germany, where they are used for cooking and chocolate manufacture.

CASSAVA (*Manihot utilissima*, and *M. aipi*); Cassada, Mandioc, Manioc. Cultivated for its roots, in many parts the staple food of the natives. Cassava bread is made from meal formed from the grated and pressed root. *M. utilissima* is known as Bitter Cassava, the root juice of which is poisonous and requires to be extracted before preparing the meal; *M. aipi* is known as Sweet Cassava, and has a non-poisonous root-juice.

CEREALS, see GRAINS.

COCOA (*Theobroma cacao*); cultivated in some parts of West Africa, though so far with no great success, probably owing to the fact that the plant requires careful cultiva-

tion for eight years before it arrives at its full bearing stage.

COFFEE. Two kinds are cultivated at Sierra Leone, viz. :—*stenophylla* (which is also found growing wild in the hills) and *liberica*. The latter, known as Liberian coffee, is exported in considerable quantities, and fetches about £2 per cwt. in Liverpool ;¹ it has a good and large berry, and comes into bearing sooner than *stenophylla*, which, however, has the finer flavour. Neither are equal in quality to *Coffea arabica*, which is not cultivated in West Africa.

COIR and COPRAH, see FIBRES and PALMS.

COTTON (*Gossypium barbadense*)² grows wild in many parts of West Africa, and is extensively cultivated in some districts, though more for the purpose of supplying local demands than for export. In the latter respect, as we mentioned in Chapter XI., the trade in this article has proved a disappointment; great hopes were entertained at one time that Manchester would be able to draw largely on West Africa for her supplies, but so far the total annual value of cotton imported into Great Britain from West Africa has never exceeded a few thousand pounds. During the American War the price of cotton became so high that the West Coast merchants saw an opportunity for developing this trade; they accordingly sent out machinery and started operations in many different parts, chiefly in the neighbourhood of the Gold Coast and Lagos. Little, however, came of the enterprise, for with the conclusion of the American War prices fell again, and there was no market for West African cotton. Still an improvement took place for a few years, as the following figures will show :—

¹ In bond; the duty on coffee coming into England is 1½*d.* per lb.; cocoa 1*d.* per lb.

² *Gossypium herbaceum* and *arboreum*.

RAW COTTON EXPORTED FROM LAGOS AND THE GOLD COAST
FOR THE SIX YEARS ENDING 1892.

YEAR.	LAGOS.	GOLD COAST.
	£	£
1887	2093	—
1888	4025	196
1889	8023	60
1890	6063	2946
1891	4825	731
1892	565	441

For the past few years the export of this article even from Lagos and the Gold Coast has been so insignificant, that its value has not been separately recorded; while from other parts of British West Africa no considerable amount of cotton has ever been exported. It seems extraordinary that this should be the case, when it is known that it grows freely in every variety of soil and is cultivated with the minimum of labour, but, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the natives are most conservative in their ideas, and prefer making up their own cloth to purchasing ready-made European material. Another point is that West African cotton (as grown in the British possessions) is of an inferior kind, that grown near Lagos being of a brown colour, rough and short. Mr. Scott Elliot says:—"The quality is not good, being only about one inch long in staple, and cannot be easily spun over thirty hanks; it is, therefore, only worth about 5*d.* to 6*d.* a pound in Manchester. The cotton grown in the country is worked into a fairly strong coarse sheeting by the natives in every village. It is first combed or carded by means of two brushes (boards six to nine inches with handles), studded with vertical steel wires. The lengths are

spun into thread, and apparently have to be wound and re-wound two or three times before the thread is in a fit condition for weaving. This process of winding seems to require exposure, and sometimes one sees the threads pegged out in a great square with sides forty to fifty feet long, round which a slave with a spindle walks carefully."¹

When the natives have been educated up to agricultural pursuits, doubtless the cultivation of cotton will receive due attention, and experiments at the different botanical stations on the Coast have proved that Egyptian, Sea Island,² and five other varieties can be grown with very little care. It has also been recently discovered that the leaves of the cotton, bruised and prepared with lime-juice and water, form a valuable remedy for dysentery, while cotton seeds provide an oil almost equal to olive oil, and the residue forms an oil cake suitable for feeding cattle.

COTTON TREE, or Silk-Cotton Tree (*Eriodendron anfractuosum*).³ Large tree with buttress trunk. The feathery wool from the seeds used for stuffing pillows, etc. An oil⁴ from the seeds. Also a gum from the bark used medicinally.

COLA, see KOLA.

DYES. See under head of CAMWOOD, HENNA, INDIGO, etc. There are numerous other native dyes, amongst which may be mentioned *Lonchocarpus cyanescens* (Country Blue, a species of indigo); *Cochlospermum tinctorium*, the root of which gives a yellow dye; *Craterispermum laurinum* and *Xylopia polycarpa*, both with a yellow dye from the bark; *Grumilea psychotrioides*, *Trichilia hendelotti*, *Rhizophora racemosa* (mangrove), and *Sorghum vulgare* (Guinea corn), red dyes; while the seeds of the common tree *Vitex cienkowski* yield a black dye which is used for ink.

¹ Colonial Report; Sierra Leone, No. 3; 1893.

² Or American, *G. barbadense*.

³ Kapok.

⁴ Worth about £5 per ton.

FIBRES. The bark of various trees yields good fibre, used by the natives for cordage, etc. The better kinds are obtained from *Sterculia cinerea*, *Grewia asiatica*, *Sesbania aculeata*,¹ and the baobab. "Dodo-cloth" is made from the fibre of the Hpokpoka tree of Sierra Leone² (*Tabernæmontana crassa*), and a very good fibre is produced by *Triumfetta semitriloba*, while the large climber known as West Indian Filbert (*Entada scandens*) is much used for ropes. Amongst other fibre-producing plants may be mentioned banana, cocoanut (coir and coprah), bowstring hemp, jute, various species of aloe,³ and *Raphia vinifera* (Bamboo palm, African Bass, Piassava); see PALMS, PIASSAVA.

FRUITS. None are exported. The following are found either wild or cultivated in different parts of West Africa:—bananas, custard apples, cocoanuts, figs, guavas, limes, mangoes, oranges, pine-apples, plantains, pomegranates, popows, avocado pears (alligator pears), plums, country-grapes, locusts, monkey bread, melons, tamarinds, water melons, etc.

GINGER (*Zingiber officinale*). Cultivated. The underground stems (above the roots) are dug up, and when scraped are known as "white ginger," unscraped "black ginger." The export is small; Sierra Leone ginger fetches about 17s. 6d. per cwt. in the Liverpool market.

GOLD, see Chapter IV.

GRAINS.⁴ The principal grains or cereals of the country are:—Sierra Leone Millet (*Paspalum exile*), commonly known as "Hungry Rice;" African Millet (*Pennisetum typhoidium*), Kous, Gero, in Bornu *gussub*; Maize (*Zea mays*), growing to a height of four or five feet, from which is made bread called *kankie* and beer called *pitto*; Rice

¹ The *Danchi* of India.

² Rubber is obtained from the husk of the fruit of this tree.

³ Chiefly for fishing-nets and small cords.

⁴ None exported.

(*Oryza sativa*), wild and cultivated; Indian Millet, or Guinea corn (*Sorghum vulgare*), the *dawa* of Hausaland, etc., which is sown in April and reaped at the end of December.

GROUND NUTS¹ (*Arachis hypogæa*), earth-pea; widely cultivated and exported. The seeds are used as food, roasted or boiled, by natives and Europeans, making, amongst other things, an excellent, thick pea-soup. They are exported to Europe either with or without the shells, and the oil extracted from them is used, as a substitute for olive oil, for delicate machinery, in the manufacture of butterine, pomade, and soap; while the refuse is made up into oil-cake for cattle. Sell in the Liverpool market at about £10 or £12 per ton.

GUINEA GRAINS; Grains of Paradise; Melegueta² pepper (*Amomum melegueta*). Seeds golden brown, hard, and of pungent taste. Used in Africa as spice, in England to flavour wine and beer, as well as in the preparation of cattle medicines. This was the "pepper" exported by the earliest European traders (Captain Windham and others) from Benin and elsewhere. Of late years, the demand in Europe seems to have almost ceased.

GUMS (including fossil resin, gum, copal, etc.). Numerous varieties, forming an important export trade, are produced by both large trees and small shrubs. *Sterculia tragacantha* (a tree forty or fifty feet in height) yields common gum arabic; *Balsamodendron africanum* (a shrub or small tree), mixed with gum arabic for the market; *Canarium edule*, a scented gum; *Anacardium occidentale*; *Cordyla africana* (large tree);³ *Daniellia thurifera*, the Frankincense tree of Sierra Leone (large tree), yielding a scented gum; Ogea gum (Yoruba country), somewhat similar to the last; *Albizzia*

¹ Vide Chapter II.

² Or *Malaguetta*.

³ Gum used by natives for making size for whitewash.

leblek (the Siris tree of India);¹ *Albizzia brownei*, a fine gum-like copal; *Sarcocephalus esculentis* (Sierra Leone peach); *Acacia mellifera*, *erubescens*, *verek*, *neboured*, *adansonii*, *albida*, *arabica*,² *senegal*, *etbaica*,³ *seyal*; ⁴ *Copaifera guibourtiana* (large tree) yields a white gum (copal), the foundation of all fine varnishes; and it fetches, in London, 7d. to 10d. per lb.; *Copaifera colophospermum* (copal), iron-wood.

Besides these, gum is extracted from many other indigenous trees; some varieties are allowed to dry on the tree, others are found by digging, having dropped from the tree and sunk into the earth. When brought to Europe the gums are carefully sorted for the market, white and pure gum being the most valuable. "Senegal" fetches about 90s. per cwt.; "Sierra Leone" copal (*C. guibourtiana*) 1s. 6d. per lb. (cleaned); "Accra" copal (fossil resin) £5 per cwt. cleaned, and half that price in its raw state. The gums are used in Europe for the following, among other, purposes, viz.:—drugs, pharmacy, distillation, confectionery, dressing lace, linen, cotton, wool, silk, etc., and for sticking purposes, as well as in the manufacture of matches, ink, blacking, etc.

HEMP (*Cannabis sativa*). Bowstring hemp, or African Flax (*Sansevieria guineensis*) grows wild and yields a good fibre (from the leaves).⁵ See FIBRES.

HENNA (*Lawsonia alba*); a shrub about six feet in height; used by the natives (chiefly by Mohammedans) for dyeing the finger-nails red. Cultivated.

¹ The leaves and twigs furnish fodder for camels.

² Gum arabic; the *babool* of India.

³ Best gum arabic, known in commerce as Kordofan, Picked Turkey, white Sennaar, or Senegal gum.

⁴ Inferior gum arabic, known in commerce as Suakim Talka or Talca gum.

⁵ The leaves are three or four feet in length, and forty pounds of leaves yield about one pound of fibre.

HIDES AND SKINS, of cattle, sheep, and goats, are exported raw and tanned, the latter chiefly overland to the Mediterranean.¹ Monkey skins are exported in great numbers from the Gold Coast, see Chapter IV.

INDIGO (*Indigofera tinctoria*, *anil*, *trita*, *hirsuta*, *endecaphylla*, *enneaphylla*, *diphylla*.² is extensively cultivated in many parts of West Africa,³ and has doubtless been known in the country and used as a dye from time immemorial, yet it can scarcely be considered an article of export. The very small amount that has been brought to Europe has never given reason to believe that the land produces much more than sufficient for the requirements of the natives; neither is the quality of West African indigo high enough to enable it to hold its own against that imported from India, where its cultivation has been brought to the highest state of perfection.⁴

INDIA RUBBER, see RUBBER.

IVORY. The trade in ivory is a decreasing one; the stored ivory has mostly been disposed of, and, owing to the general disturbed state of the interior, the natives are unable to devote their attention to elephant-hunting to any great extent. Though the herds of elephants are not as numerous as they formerly were, considerable numbers are still found in the hinterland of all the British possessions, and the export of ivory from the Niger is by no means insignificant.⁵ It seems very doubtful if the trade in this article from West Africa will ever increase.

¹ Vide page 235.

² Also *Lonchocarpus cyanescens* (West African indigo), a woody climber twenty to thirty feet long, yielding a good and permanent blue dye.

³ Flowers from August to March; plants cut down before the flowering stage.

⁴ In England a pound of Bengal indigo is worth about 7s. 6d.; a pound of West African about 4s.

⁵ Vide page 227.

JUTE (*Corchorus olitorius*), the jute of commerce, wild and cultivated. Its cultivation is being encouraged in all the British possessions, and experiments at the Old Calabar botanical station have proved most successful.

KERNELS, see **PALM OIL**.

KOLA (*Cola acuminata*); tree twenty to thirty feet in height, both indigenous and cultivated in most parts of West Africa between 5° S. and 10° N. Lat.¹ The nuts, which are somewhat bitter in taste, are highly esteemed by the natives, and have of late years been introduced into England and worked up with cocoa and other materials. To the Mohammedan of West Africa the kola nut supplies the place of coffee, in such request with his Oriental co-religionists; while for satisfying the cravings of hunger and thirst, and for its immense sustaining powers against fatigue, it is deemed equal to the dried dates of the Bedouins. It is said to render putrid water agreeable, and the roots of the kola tree are used, far and wide, as "chewsticks" for cleaning the teeth and sweetening the breath. The nut itself varies in size from the dimensions of an ordinary chestnut to about two or three inches in diameter, and is enclosed in a shell which has three or four divisions, enabling it to be divided without breaking. "To the African," says Monteil, "the kola nut is as indispensable as beetul to the Hindu or native of Anam, as opium to the Chinaman, as cigarettes to the Spaniard, as the dog to the blind man." In colour the flesh ranges from white to red, and the nuts are sorted according to their colour, which is often of very great importance, for kola nuts enter into the daily life of all West African Mohammedans, and constitute almost a language. Offers of marriage, refusals and acceptances, declarations of war, and countless other transactions are arranged by means of the number and colour of kola nuts

¹ It thrives on all soils, and is found at all heights from sea-level to 3000 feet or more.

strung together (or otherwise), and sent by one party to another. The first act of friendship and hospitality is a present of white kola nuts, and before commencing any discussion of a political or other nature, the breaking of the kola nut of friendship is a necessity.

The nuts grow in bunches of three or four, and their export into the countries of the Soudan, even as far east as Khartoum, is a very flourishing trade. For long journeys the red nuts are considered the best, and they are packed with the greatest care in large leather-covered baskets, holding three or four thousand. Each layer of nuts is covered with leaves, and sprinkled with water, as it is necessary for them to be kept moist; but no air must reach them, otherwise they divide and become hard, when they are almost valueless. An estimate of their value as they travel further from the place of growth may be formed by knowing that a kola nut is originally worth about five cowries; at Kano it is worth one hundred and twenty cowries, and at Kuka three hundred. In the Liverpool market they fetch about 3*d.* per lb. A full and careful analysis of the kola nut will be found in *Semler, Tropische Agrikultur*, 1892, page 200.

LOCUST (*Parkia biglobosa*), African locust. A large tree, with edible seeds, used by the natives as a substitute for coffee and chocolate.

LOOFAH (*Luffa ægyptiaca*); used for brushes and sponges; small quantities exported. The seeds yield an oil.

MANIOC, see CASSAVA.

MINERALS. With the exception of gold and iron, few minerals have been as yet found in West Africa. Tin has been discovered in the Niger Territories, and it is imagined that it exists in considerable quantities.

OILS with various properties are extracted from numerous seeds and nuts, such as *Peothaclethra macrophylla*; the *Iceco* or Cocoa plum; Mabo seeds; M'Poga nuts; Niko seeds;

seeds of the cucumber, water melon, colocynth, pumpkin, bamboo palm, etc. See BENISEED, CASHEW, GROUND-NUT, HEMP, LOOFAH, PALMS, PALM OIL.

PALMS. The principal palms found in the country are :— Oil palm (*Elæis guineensis*),¹ twenty to thirty feet in height, see PALM OIL; Cocoa-nut (*Cocos nucifera*),² sixty to one hundred feet; the thick fibrous rind of the fruit yields coir fibre, and a valuable oil (used for cooking, burning, and candle and soap making) is obtained from the fruit; Date (*Phoenix dactylifera*), in small quantities; Palmyra (*Borassus flabelliformis* or *æthiopum*); Doum, or Gingerbread Tree (*Hyphæne thebaica* or *guineensis*), grows to a height of thirty feet, the rind of the fruit is eaten; Bamboo-palm (*Raphia vinifera*), leaf-stalk used for poles (a substitute for bamboos), leaves used for thatch, basket-making, and other purposes, seeds yield an oil, see RUBBER; *Raphia hookeri*,³ leaves used for thatch, cloths, hammocks, mats, baskets, etc., and a good wine is obtained from the sap; *Raphia welwitschii*, leaves woven into cloth; *Calamus*, stems used for basket-making; *Phoenix spinosa*, young leaves used for making hats, fruit edible, wine made from the sap; *Scelerosperma mannii*, stemless palm, leaves used for thatching; *Pododocus barteri*, small tree about eight feet high.

PALM OIL, the principal export from the West Coast of Africa, is obtained from the fruit of *Elæis guineensis*, which both grows wild and is cultivated in the regions adjacent to the Coast. The tree bears best when growing in damp soil, and when no taller than twelve feet, though it attains double this height as it advances in age. The fruit grows in large prickly clusters, and its skin is of a bright red or orange colour, turning to yellow when ripe; its pulp is somewhat

¹ Wine is made from the sap of the oil palm.

² Cultivated; not indigenous to West Africa.

³ Wild, and cultivated for its wine.



PALMS NEAR LAGOS.

[The face page 111.]

bitter in taste, and reddish-white in colour, and within the fruit is a stone (with kernel), about the size of a filbert. An average tree commences to bear between the seventh and twelfth year, lasts in bearing for about forty years, and yields twenty pounds of nuts ¹ in a season, of which there are two in the year.² The natives have various uses for the oil; in cooking it takes the place of the ghee of India, and a favourite West African dish of both natives and Europeans is "palm-oil chop," which consists of meat or fish swimming in palm-oil; again, it is used as a pomade for the hair, as a lubricant for the skin, and for burning in the primitive lamps of the houses. For these purposes it is somewhat roughly prepared. After the nuts are gathered, they are kept in a hot place for three or four days, when the stones are removed, and the pulp is boiled in an iron pot. This completed, the mass is pounded in a wooden mortar, then mixed with water, and again boiled, until the oil floats out and is skimmed off the surface of the water.

For export, a more elaborate process is followed. The bunches of nuts are cut from the trees, and the husks carefully removed. The flesh of the fruit, i.e. the pulp, is at this time hard, and, before the stone can be extracted, has to be softened; the nuts are therefore buried in a deep pit for several weeks, which produces decomposition and renders them soft. They are now placed in a wooden mortar, and pounded until the flesh leaves the stone, when a treatment similar to that described above is followed, concluding with the straining of the oil through a fine net bag. This is the general method of preparation, and the value of the oil in the English market depends on the care with which it has been

¹ The weight of the oil extracted is equal to nearly half the weight of the nuts; one gallon of palm oil weighs 9 lbs., and it takes about 6000 bunches to make one ton of oil.

² Nuts gathered in the rainy season furnish the best oil.

prepared, as well as on the particular locality in which the tree grows. The trade terms for the different qualities imported into England are "hard," "soft," "medium," "regular," and "irregular." "Hard" oil contains a large proportion of stearine, is used principally by candle-makers, and comes from the Gold Coast, Niger, Brass, and New Calabar; "soft" oil is used in the manufacture of soap and for lubricating purposes,¹ and is imported from Sierra Leone, Sherboro, Lagos, Bonny, Opobo, and Old Calabar; while "medium" oil is either of the two former qualities which sets after melting.² The terms "regular" and "irregular" refer to the locality from which the oil comes (the former from the Oil Rivers, the latter from other parts), and are used to specify the allowance, made to the buyer, for impurities. Lagos oil is the finest, softest, and most neutral, and is considered quite pure;³ but all other oils are analyzed before sale (in Liverpool), the buyer of "regular oil" getting an impurity allowance of 2 per cent., and the buyer of "irregular" oil receiving the full allowance for impurities.

With regard to the trade in palm oil, the following figures are interesting, as showing the increase in the amount imported into Great Britain, at different periods, from the whole of West Africa:—1790, 2599 cwts.; 1800, 4467; 1810, 25,754; 1820, 17,456; 1830, 213,467; 1840, 315,458; 1850, 434,450; 1860, 804,326; 1870, 868,270; 1880, 1,026,380; 1896, 1,204,679. This, of course, does not represent the whole of the trade, since very large quantities of the oil go direct to other European countries. The price in the Liverpool market varies immensely; in January, 1898, the best

¹ A certain amount of glycerine comes from palm oil, and when refined is used in the preparation of medicines, nitro-glycerine, &c.

² Hard oil is as thick as butter, soft oil is liquid.

³ Much used in South Wales in tin-plate manufacture.

oil was being sold at 22s. per ton, though a few years ago it was worth almost double that amount.

The utilization of the kernels¹ of the fruit is of comparatively recent date, the first regular importers being Messrs. Hutton and Sons, who commenced the import in 1848, since which time the trade has increased steadily. The oil obtained for these kernels is sold in two qualities, viz. white and black (or brown). In the manufacture of both kinds of palm kernel oil, it is important to crush the stone carefully so as to extract the kernel whole. The white oil is prepared in the following manner:—The kernels are first pounded fine in a wooden mortar; then ground under a grinding stone, after which the mass is put into cold water and stirred, until the oil rises in white lumps on the surface of the water, when it is skimmed off, boiled, and bleached in the sun. The process followed to produce black (or brown) oil is somewhat different:—The kernels are fried in a pan, which extracts a certain amount of oil; this is strained, and the kernels are then pounded and ground and then placed into boiling water, the oil being skimmed off as it rises to the surface. The pulpy mass remaining is subjected to further treatment. It is removed from the fire, and spread out in a large vessel to cool, then softened by being mixed with water; beaten with the hand, some more water added, when the fatty oil is collected and boiled until it results in a pure oil.² Palm kernels are imported into Liverpool in the raw state, and fetch about £10 per ton.

PEPPER; black; Guinea cubebs; Benin pepper.³ *Piper clusii*, and *P. guineense* (Ashanti pepper), &c. *Piper clusii* grows freely at Sierra Leone, and its seeds are worth about

¹ The best kernels come from the Oil Rivers and Lagos.

² Meal, obtained from the kernels after crushing, makes an excellent oil-cake for cattle.

³ See GUINEA-GRAINS.

£20 per cwt. *Piper nigrum* (black pepper), a climber, is also cultivated at Sierra Leone, and exported in considerable quantities. Red pepper, see CAPSICUM.

PIASSAVA, African bass, fibre obtained from the bamboo palm (*Raphia vinifera*), is largely exported, and sells in Liverpool for about £25 to £30 per ton.

PITH, see SOLAH.

RUBBER; Indian rubber; caoutchouc. Second in value as an export only to palm oil, and of quite recent development.¹ The rubber is obtained from two principal varieties of trees, viz. :—Creepers or rubber vines, and species of *ficus*; both are widely distributed and indigenous. *Landolphia owariensis* (white rubber vine) yields the best rubber; *Landolphia florida*, a large woody climber, is abundant in the forests. Liberian rubber is obtained from *Ficus* (or *Urostigma*) *vogelii*, a tree growing to a height of twenty to thirty feet; a cut is made in the trunk when the tree is about five years old, and the sap is collected in vessels, rolled into balls (the size of a cricket ball), and sold in this form. The vine rubber is collected in a somewhat different manner; a slit is made in the vine, from which the juice exudes, but quickly dries; in order, therefore, to maintain the flow, the native keeps the slit open, and smears the rubber over his arms and breast, after which he peels it off and rolls it into balls. Mention has been made in previous chapters of the rapid development of this trade and its prospects. The rubber sells in Liverpool at about 1s. to 2s. 6d. per lb., according to quality, the form in which it is sent to England giving rise to a variety of trade terms, such as:—Cape Coast and Benin lump; Sierra Leone niggers and twists; Gambia thimbles; Gold Coast strips and biscuits; Niger heads, &c.

SASSEY-BARK; sass-wood; ordeal bark; a large tree

¹ Vide page 114.

(*Erythrophleum guineense*), with valuable and hard wood. The bark is a powerful poison, a decoction of which is used by the natives for ordeal purposes, as well as for poisoning arrows.¹

SENNA (*Cassia obovata*), the senna of commerce.

SHEA-BUTTER, also called Galam, or Bambuk-butter; obtained from the fruit of a large and handsome tree (*Butyrospermum parkii*).² The tree is indigenous and widely distributed in the interior, being found in great numbers in the Hausa country. In appearance it resembles the American oak, growing to a height of about forty feet, and having a massive trunk. The wood is red like cedar, and is close-grained and hard. The flesh of the fruit is eaten by the natives, and the so-called butter extracted from the kernel takes the place of palm-oil in the inland parts of West Africa. The process of making the butter is very similar to that employed in the manufacture of palm kernel oil,³ though, for native use, it is made up into cakes and wrapped round with leaves, when it will keep fresh for several months. It is exported principally from the Niger, and its selling price in Liverpool runs with that of palm-oil, as a substitute for which it is used in Europe. Shea gutta is the name applied to a substance, of the nature of gutta percha, found in shea-butter, but, so far, no use has been made of it.

SOLAH (*Æschynomene aspera*), pith used for floats, hat-making, &c. Another pith, similarly used, is *Herminiera elaphroxylon*.

TAMARIND (*Tamarindus indica*), the well-known tamarind tree. The leaves give a yellow dye.

¹ Another common arrow poison is the milky juice of the *Euphorbia*.

² Or *Bassia parkii*, so named after Ferdinand Bassi, Curator of the Bologna Botanical Gardens, who examined the first specimen brought to Europe by Mungo Park. Hausa name, Kedania.

³ See page 451.

TIMBER. Many valuable timber trees are found in the forests of West Africa, but the export of timber to Great Britain is insignificant, though a certain amount of trade is carried on in dye-woods and ebony. Mahogany is exported chiefly from the Gold Coast, but there appears to be a falling off in the trade, the value of which, in 1894, was £69,000, in 1895 £28,000; it was, at one time, shipped also from Gambia, but not in sufficient quantities to compete with South America. The principal timber trees of present commercial value are:—African oak or African teak (*Oldfieldia africana*), imported into England for ship-building and other purposes; African Rosewood (*Pterocarpus eruiaceus*), a large tree (seventy feet high), with a fine grain, from which, by making incisions in the trunk, is obtained the “Dragon’s Blood” of commerce, a juice of a deep red colour used in Europe for staining marbles, colouring varnish, &c.; and ebony, whose black wood is well known.

TOBACCO (*Nicotiana tabacum*), cultivated by the natives for home consumption, but not exported. The country does not grow sufficient for its wants.

VEGETABLES. None exported. The following are the principal cultivated by the natives for their own use:—Cucumber, gourd,¹ shalott, sweet potato, yam (wild and cultivated), onions, peas and beans of different kinds, egg-plant or brinjal, wild mustard, cassava, and various other native vegetables, whose leaves or roots are eaten.

WAX is collected in various parts of West Africa and largely exported; Gambia bees’ wax fetches in the Liverpool market £6 to £6 10s. per cwt.

¹ Cultivated chiefly for use as calabashes (bowls, drinking-vessels, &c.).



CHAPTER XXIII.

POSSIBLY the more general term of Anthropology¹ would at first sight seem to be more appropriate to the matter to be dealt with in this chapter, but, having already treated of the customs and religious beliefs of the pagans, we propose confining ourselves now to the native superstitions, traditions, myths, &c., the origins of which are usually unknown to the people themselves; and, in laying before the reader some of the folk-tales of the country, we hope to enable him to compare the mental condition of the native of these parts with that of other savages. A primitive country like West Africa offers to the student of folk-lore much that is interesting, since he finds actually in existence customs and beliefs which, among more civilized people, are merely the survivals of derelict beliefs and ancient traditions. A few centuries hence, doubtless the present religious ideas of the negro will have been relegated to the domains of folk-lore pure and simple, though there will be little difficulty, with the plethora of literature on the subject, in solving many of the various mysteries. A visitor to the Niger, say in the twenty-second century, may find the piccaninnies insulting

¹ "Anthropology is the science which deals with savage beliefs and customs in *all* their aspects; folk-lore deals with them in one of their aspects only, namely, as factors in the mental life of man, which, having survived in the highest civilizations, whether of ancient or modern times, are capable of surrendering much of the history of that mental life to the scientific observer."—*Folk-Lore Society*.

each other by the holding up of two fingers; the origin will not be far to seek when reference is made to old books on the country, for nowadays no grosser insult can be offered to an Ibo woman—implying as it does that she is the mother of twins.¹

The traditions of the people are, as a whole, decidedly poor, and devoid of any great imagination. Their creation myths, where such are found, not unfrequently show traces of European or Arab origin, and even in cases where the people have speculated as to the beginning of all things, they appear to have got no further than the idea that the world always existed in its present form, but that its inhabitants have undergone a change. In those parts where the priesthood has become fully developed, we find tolerably complete accounts of the dawn of the world, handed down from generation to generation of the priests, and doubtless added to and improved by each generation. Before the earth was peopled by men, say the Yorubas, there was always Olorun, the great god of the firmament, and by him another god, Obatala, was created and placed in charge of all things connected with the firmament and earth. For Obatala was created also a goddess-wife named Odudua, who bore a boy and a girl named respectively Aganju and Yemaja. The brother and sister married, and had a son called Orungan, whose evil doings brought about the violent death of his mother, at which event there sprang from her body fifteen gods and goddesses. On the spot where Yemaja died, runs the legend, the town of Ife was built, and was for many centuries considered as a sacred city. In this manner the Yorubas account for the creation of their gods, by whom at one time the world was, they maintain, alone inhabited. As to the period of man's creation opinions differ, some holding

¹ *Vide* page 331. In Benin the holding up of two fingers has an entirely different meaning, as explained by Captain Boisragon in his *Benin Massacre*.

that the first couple were made out of mud by Obatala ; others that they came from Yemaja's body with the gods, and that they were named Obalofun (Lord of Speech) and Iya (Mother).

Among the Gold Coast and other tribes the following myth is not uncommon:—In the beginning a god created three white men and three white women, and a similar number of black men and women. Before the twelve he placed a covered calabash and a folded piece of paper, commanding them to choose between the two. The black people chose the calabash, and the white people the paper ; and when each was opened, it was found that the former contained some scraps of metal, while on the latter were inscribed full instructions for making everything, which implied that the black people were to be for ever subservient to the white. This myth cannot be of very ancient origin, as six centuries ago white people were probably unknown to the negroes, and, at any rate, paper was a thing unheard of.¹ As with most primitive conceptions of the original population of the earth, the manlike gods were followed by giants, who issued from the sea and the rivers and lived with men, fighting their battles, performing marvellous feats, and leaving their marks behind them in the shape of colossal rocks, into which they were frequently turned by the witchcraft of some cunning man. But the giant has not retained such an important place in negro folk-tales as he has in our own fairy stories ; in fact, he is but seldom mentioned, possibly because the pagan believes that giants and spirits of all kinds, though usually invisible, still actually exist, and are not to be trifled with. Of historical legends there are few, if any, relating to very early times, and the peopling of the coast regions is ascribed to a period considerably after the introduction of

¹ By some of the West Coast tribes the origin of man is traced to a gigantic spider, but this is, perhaps, merely the outcome of totemism.

Islam into Africa, the present inhabitants holding the tradition that they originally came from the interior, whence they were driven south by Mohammedan warriors. The reason that they were not wholly exterminated is accounted for by the fact that the Mohammedans fought on horseback, and were consequently unable to follow the pagans into the forest country.

Local legends,¹ of course, are prevalent, though they are not, as a rule, of any particular originality. The following story related of the first Attah or king of the Igaras (Lower Niger) may be regarded as a variant of the Romulus and Remus myth, and to contain in it something akin to totemism. "In the days when Iddah was but a village, a woman from Ohimoje chanced to find her way thither. Whilst there she had occasion one day to visit the neighbouring bush in search of firewood, and, being great with child, brought forth a boy before she could return to the village. Now, the woman was afraid to bring her child back with her, so she left it in the bush at the mercy of the wild beasts. It happened that a female leopard, passing that way in search of food, espied the infant, and, taking it up, conveyed it to her lair, where she reared it with her own cubs. The child in time grew up, and the foster-mother, having observed the ways of human beings, was troubled about his nakedness. She therefore repaired to the neighbourhood of Iddah, and lay in wait for a passer-by. After some time there came a man from the town, and on him the leopardess threw herself, carrying off his cloth and cap to her foster-child. As the boy advanced in years, the leopard became anxious that he should associate with human beings, and for this purpose guided him to the outskirts of Iddah, where she left him. The young man

¹ The more important pagan kingdoms maintain, at court, an official whose sole duty is to recount the traditions and hand down the history of the kingdom.



FESTIVAL DRESS AT OLD CALABAR.

[To face page 480.]

entered the town, and the first thing that met his gaze was a fight between two of the inhabitants. He at once took upon himself the duties of arbiter, rebuking the one and commending the other. So astonished were the people who had during the incident crowded round him, that they immediately proclaimed him their king, and refused to permit him to leave the town. This was the first Attah, and he married wives of the people, and had children bold and intrepid as leopards. But he was destined to see once again his strange foster-mother. The leopardess was about to die, and came to take a last farewell of the child she had reared. The Attah recognized her, and clinging to her, begged that she would remain with him. This was, however, not to be, for the aged beast, freeing herself, ran to a certain spot in the town, and, throwing herself down, expired. The Attah, following on her tracks, flung himself on the corpse and died also; and the people, finding the two dead bodies, buried them together where they lay, with all the honours due to royalty. The burial spot has ever since been held sacred, and is called Azaina, or the Grave of the Leopard, where to this day the Attahs of Iddah are interred."

In a country where superstitions reign supreme, and where every misfortune is ascribed to the evil disposition of some kind of spirit, where death, even in old age, is regarded as unnatural and the result of witchcraft, it is not wonderful that omens, good and ill, are extensively believed in. Seers, fortune-tellers, magicians, and witches are to be found in every tribe—generally either belonging to the priesthood or in the employment of the priests. The methods adopted by the fortune-teller are not peculiar to West Africa, and, since the simple-minded people are overawed by the very name of magic, it requires but little ingenuity to deceive them. A handful of nuts, a few cowries, some scraps of leather, or pieces of stick are thrown on the ground, and from the

positions in which they fall the fortune-teller professes to be able to read the events of a lifetime. Apart from the wizards and the fortune-tellers, there exist very numerous popular beliefs, upheld no doubt by the priests, but apparently as old as the tribes whose members put faith in them, and in most cases without even a myth to account for them. There are lucky days and unlucky days, but these, when affecting a whole tribe, are usually connected with some historical or traditional event, the defeat of a powerful enemy or the tragic death of some old king or warrior, and, so far, Zadkiel and the heavenly bodies have played no part in shaping the destiny of the negro. In the matter of omens each tribe has its own peculiar beliefs, though a comparison shows that many of the ideas are very widely diffused. Thus, the cries or actions of certain birds foretell calamities to the individuals who hear them or to the village over which they fly while uttering the cry. Impending war is foretold to the Igbiras of the Benué River by the cry of the crested crane, and to the people of the Slave Coast by the flocking of the hooded crow and of vultures. The owl is everywhere a bird of ill-omen, and his cry heard at night implies death in the family of the hearer—usually a sudden or violent death, which, among the Gold Coast natives, is called “Owl’s death” (*pehtu-wuh*). So dreaded is the owl, in fact, that the people fear even to mention its name, speaking of it as “the bird that makes one afraid,” or by some similar expression, and the Ewés regard it as a cannibal and the messenger of cannibals. The crow also has an evil repute, and is considered to be in league with cannibals and with various malignant spirits; no rain falls where it lays its eggs, and the most powerful juju can be made from its feathers and flesh. While on the subject of bird omens, we may give a few other instances; cocks that crow in the middle of the night bespeak death, which can only be averted by the

immediate despatch of the offending bird ; while in Dahomey the superstition is carried still further, for Ellis tells us that “even during the day, cocks may not crow in a street, market, or public place, and any bird that does so is confiscated to the priests. In consequence of this custom, which the natives are unable or unwilling to explain, cocks always occur gagged by a cord or thong, placed behind the mandibles and fastened behind the head.” The cry of the black and white kingfisher is a good omen when heard to the right, a bad one if heard to the left. The long-tailed Whydah-bird is held sacred in Dahomey, because one of the early kings returning from a victory is said to have been met by a flock of these birds, who sang his praises ; and certain women, not only of Dahomey but also of Yoruba, are supposed to be able to converse with the bird. Then there is the African pheasant, whose shrill note of alarm is considered to have the power of bursting the gun of anyone firing at it—a power ascribed also to a species of monkey and to a species of antelope.

The superstitions connected with animals are as numerous as those relating to birds. The fur of a hare protects the house from fire ; to kill a jackal brings calamity ; a dog beaten to death and hung by the heels to a scaffold in the market-place prevents disease ; the tail of a cow, horse, or goat waved in front of a man turns the missiles of his enemy ; while it is believed that any town in which the wild cat beats its tail three times on the ground will shortly be deserted. The Yorubas and adjacent tribes say that the porcupine, before going to look for food, shakes its quills in order to divine what the result of the search will be ; and the tortoise is credited with causing mirages, by making a subterranean fire to burn and destroy the roots of trees.¹ There are likewise certain fabulous beasts said to exist in the recesses

¹ Ellis' *Yoruba-speaking Peoples, etc.*

of the forest ; the Aja of the Egbas is a dwarf, who carries off men to the bush and teaches them magic and medicine ; while a somewhat similar beast "erect, manlike, and loud-voiced, teaches the hunter fetish, and makes him wondrous brave."

The Ashantis consider it a bad omen for a male child to be born to an enemy in Ashanti territory, though the birth of a female child is held to be the reverse. Among the Ibos, children who cut the upper teeth first are killed, as showing signs of being possessed of an evil spirit. Sneezing forebodes a coming misfortune with most of the tribes, while the Gold Coast people suppose that the indwelling spirit of the sneezer is in pain, and in consequence it is customary to wish him long life and good health, a survival of which is to be found in our "God bless you," and the Mohammedan "Allah," as similarly used. The belief in magic and witchcraft of course accounts for the superstitions connected with nail-parings and cuttings of hair, the possession of which by an evil-disposed person can be utilized for working ill against the individual from whom they have been removed ; and for this reason a native is careful to destroy such things after performing his toilet. To show what importance is attached to nails and hair, we may mention here that in the case of a man dying abroad it is quite sufficient for burial purposes to cut off from the corpse portions of these articles and convey them home for the due performance of the funeral ceremonies.

West African folk-tales can hardly be compared with those of Europe and Asia, for though the advance of the Mohammedans is gradually influencing the old stories of the pagans, the negro's intellect is not as yet sufficiently developed to understand the points of such tales as the *Arabian Nights* ; but fairy tales not altogether unlike our *Cinderella*, *Jack the Giant-killer*, etc., are frequently met

with. As with all peoples without a written language, story-telling has become, if not actually a fine art, at any rate a profession to certain members of each African tribe, and the story-teller is one of the most important personages at every entertainment. In relating his story, he usually accompanies himself with a drum, which he beats to fill up the pauses, and the more telling parts of the dialogue are given in verse or song. Animals are perhaps the principal characters of the fables, which, though somewhat *Æsopian* in their natures, appear to point to little or no moral, and to be nothing more than anecdotes of beast life, sometimes accounting for some peculiarity in the animal. The same class of story is common enough in Europe; thus, there are fables relating to the shortness of the rabbit's tail, why the hind legs of a hare are longer than the forelegs, and so on. The following is the West African version of the reason why monkeys live in trees. One day a bush-cat, after a fruitless day's hunting, sat down to rest, but was so troubled by fleas that she could get no repose. At last she hailed a passing monkey, whose services she enlisted, and was soon able to go comfortably to sleep. The monkey, however, thought this too good an opportunity to let slip, so tied up the bush-cat's tail to a tree and ran away. At length the bush-cat awoke, and discovering what had happened, called to a snail that was crawling by to come and untie her. This he did, and the bush-cat went home to work out a plan for revenging herself on the monkey. Calling all the animals together, she commanded them to announce her death, and make arrangements for her burial five days hence. On the appointed day, the bush-cat's body was laid out in state, and all the beasts of the field assembled round it; but when the monkey came to mourn the loss of his old enemy, she suddenly sprang up and tried to catch him. The monkey was, however, too quick, and escaped into the trees, which,

from fear of the bush-cat, he has ever since made his home.

In a Yoruba story of the hare, why it has longer ears than most animals, and why it runs away, we get the origin of Uncle Remus' "Tar-baby." The story opens with a description of a dry season, when the animals suffered from hunger and thirst, until at last they assembled in council and decided that each animal should cut off the tips of his ears, that the fat from them should be extracted and sold, that the money should be devoted for the purchase of hoes, and that a well should be dug. All this was accordingly done (except that the hare refused to have his ears cut), and the animals slaked their thirst at the well that they had dug. About midday, the hare came along with a calabash dragging behind him, and the noise that it made frightened all the other animals away, so that the hare had the well to himself. First he drank his fill, and then he proceeded to bathe, and in so doing he stirred up the mud at the bottom of the well. The next day the animals discovered what had happened, and not knowing who the offender was, determined to set a trap to catch him. They procured an image, smeared it with bird-lime, and set it up near the well, while they concealed themselves close by in the bush. "The hare came," says the Yoruba story-teller; "he approached the image. He never suspected that all the animals were hidden in the bush. The hare saluted the image. The image said nothing. He saluted again, and still the image said nothing.

" 'Take care,' said the hare, 'or I will give you a slap.'

"He gave a slap, and his right hand remained fixed in the bird-lime. He slapped with his left hand, and that remained fixed also.

" 'Oh ! oh !' cried he, 'let us kick with our feet.'

“He kicked with his feet. The feet remained fixed, and the hare could not get away.

“Then the animals ran out of the bush and came to see the hare and his calabash.

“‘Shame, shame, O hare,’ they cried together. ‘Did you not agree with us to cut off the tips of your ears, and when it came to your turn, did you not refuse? What! you refused, and yet you come to muddy our water?’

“They took whips, they fell upon the hare, and they beat him. They beat him so that they nearly killed him.

“We ought to kill you, accursed hare,’ they said, ‘but no—run.’ They let him go, and the hare fled. Since then he does not leave the grass.”

The tortoise is the hero of many a Yoruba story, and is the embodiment of everything¹ cunning, outwitting all other animals,¹ and even mankind; while among the Gold Coast tribes his place is taken by the spider. Occasionally there is a moral attached to the tortoise story, usually pointing to the evils of greediness, but, for the most part, the doings of the tortoise are not of a very exciting nature. We will, however, give one example, which describes how the bald-headed elf (as the tortoise is designated) made a bet that he would ride the elephant into town.

“Tortoise went into the forest and met the elephant. He said to him, ‘My father, all the animals say you are too stout and big to come to town.’

“The elephant was vexed. He said, ‘The animals are fools. If I do not come to town it is because I prefer the forest. Besides, I do not know the way to town.’

“‘Oh!’ said the bald-headed elf, ‘then come with me. I will show you the way to town, and you can put all the animals to shame.’

¹ Cf. Æsop's fable of the Tortoise and the Hare.

“So the elephant followed him.

“When they were near the town the bald-headed elf said, ‘My father, I am tired. Will you kindly allow me to get on your back?’

“‘All right,’ said the elephant. He knelt down, and tortoise climbed up on his back. Then they went on along the road.

“The bald-headed elf said, ‘My father, when I scratch your back you must run, and when I knock my head against your back you must run faster; then you will make a fine display in the town.’ The elephant said, ‘Very well.’

“When they came near the town, the bald-headed elf scratched the elephant’s back, and he began to run. He knocked his back with his head, and the elephant ran faster.

“The animals when they saw this were frightened. They went into their houses, but they looked out of their windows. And tortoise called out to them, ‘Did I not say I would ride my father’s slave to town?’

“‘What do you mean by your father’s slave?’ said the elephant, growing angry.

“‘I am only praising you,’ said tortoise.

“But the elephant saw the other animals laughing, and grew more angry. ‘I will throw you down on the hard stones here, and break you to pieces,’ he cried.

“‘Yes, yes, that is right,’ said the bald-headed elf. ‘Throw me down here. That will be all right. Then I shall not die; then I shall not be hurt. If you really want to kill me, you ought to carry me to a swamp. There I shall die at once, for the mud and water will drown me.’

“The elephant believed the bald-headed elf. He ran to the swamp, and threw tortoise into the mud. Then he stretched out his foot to kick him, but the bald-headed elf dived in the mire, and came up in another place. The other animals were there, looking on, and tortoise called out

to them, 'Did I not say I would ride my father's slave to town?'

"When the elephant found that he could not catch the bald-headed elf, he ran away at full speed to the forest. Since then the elephant has not come to town any more."¹

Sometimes the tortoise's cunning fails him, as, for instance, when he was caught by the owner of a plantation in the act of stealing his yams, and was smashed to pieces. This misfortune accounts for the seams on his shell, which are said to be the joins where he was mended up—a task which fell to the cockroach and the ant. The negro, being of an inquisitive turn of mind, requires an explanation for everything of this kind, and many tales could be quoted wherein is given the reason for the manners and customs of various beasts and birds.

The Yorubas have a proverb, "The flying fox is neither rat nor bird," which they apply to a man who has no mind of his own, and its derivation comes from the following fable: "The flying fox lay in his house very sick, and there was no one to tend him, so that he died. The neighbours then consulted amongst themselves as to his burial, and called in the birds, saying, 'Your relation is dead.' But the birds replied, 'This is not one of our family, who all wear feathers; this is a flying fox, and he belongs not to us!' So the neighbours saw that the birds were right, and decided that the deceased belonged to the family of rats. The rats were accordingly summoned to bury their relative, but, seeing that it was a flying fox, they said, 'This is not one of our family; every one of our family has a tail, and the flying fox has none!' Thus the flying fox, having no relations, remained unburied."

The strong smell possessed by goats is thus accounted

¹ *Uncle Remus* makes Brer Rabbit ride Brer Fox in a very similar manner.

for :—" Long ago, before the Portuguese came to the Gold Coast, there was a goddess who was celebrated for the delicate perfume which she emitted, and which was caused by some rare ointment with which she anointed herself. All the animals were delighted with this perfume, but the goats most of all. They took so much pleasure in it that they were bold enough to ask the goddess to give them some of it, so that they might have the perfume always with them, even when she was absent. To this request the goddess seemingly consented ; but really, to punish their impertinence, took a pot of bad-smelling ointment, and with this she anointed them. The smell of this ointment was so powerful that it has lasted to this day. The goats, however, were unable to detect the difference in smell, and were very well pleased with their perfume ; and, in order to prevent it being washed off, always sought shelter when rain fell—a habit which their descendants have continued to the present time." ¹

These animal stories are, perhaps, the most popular, but there are fairy tales, not unlike some of our own, the general form being descriptive of the visit of a child or other human being to the underground abode of the goblins, and the accumulation of vast wealth. There is, however, this difference between the West African fairy tale and the European : in place of the fortunate finder of treasure bringing it home, marrying a prince, and living happy ever afterwards, the negro girl usually comes to an untimely end by being torn to pieces by wild beasts. Fairy music is firmly believed in, as indeed it was barely a century ago by the more northern Europeans ; any particularly popular tune is said to have been learned from the fairies or wood-nymphs. A hunter or a child belated in the forest stumbles on a gathering of fairies dancing and singing ; the tunes are of course more beautiful than anything known to human beings,

¹ Ellis.

and the listener, on returning home, is able to remember them and teach them to others.¹ Marriages between men and mermaids, and visits to the palaces under the sea, also form the subject of the higher class of story; while fairy tales in which the hero is possessed of the power of assuming the shape of a hyæna or other wild beast are very frequently met with.

From what we have said, the reader will be able to make his own comparison between the stock-in-trade of the negro story-teller and the tales related in other parts of the world. A few, it will be noticed, bear a decided resemblance to European stories; whether this is mere accident, or whether a common origin is accountable for the similarity, we will not pretend to say, and it is perhaps unnecessary to remark that the "Uncle Remus" stories are mere adaptations of those of West Africa, carried by the slaves to the West Indian and American plantations.

From stories we come to proverbs, which are held in high esteem by all the West African pagans, who regard a knowledge of them as a proof of great wisdom. The man who in a palaver can interlard his speech with the apt quotation of proverbs is looked on as a high-class orator, for to be conversant with the hundreds of proverbs of a country which has no written language, and to be able to fit in the right one, must necessitate, at any rate, a good memory. Many convey little or no meaning to Europeans unacquainted with the ins and outs of native manners and customs, but equivalents are to be found for most, if not all, of our own proverbs, and it will be interesting to mention some of these, our equivalent being easily recognizable. "He who boasts much cannot do much"; "Talk in the house makes no man excel"; "Full-belly child says to hungry-belly child, 'keep good heart'"; "Every man's character is good in his own

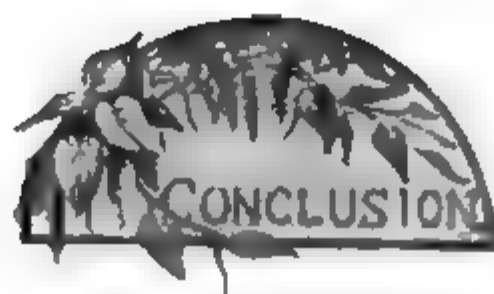
¹ Vide *Up the Niger*, page 280.

eyes"; "The young cannot teach the elders traditions"; "Gold should be sold to him who knows its value"; "The dawn does not come twice to wake a man"; "You cannot kill game by looking at it"; "The rat has no voice to call the cat to account"; "Famine compels one to eat the fruit of all kinds of trees"; "One tree does not make a forest"; "Where war is, there the drum will be."

In the matter of proverbs and proverbial sayings the Yorubas¹ probably excel all other West African tribes, and they are very fond of aphorisms in couplet form; thus they say: "Familiarity induces contempt: but distance secures respect." Again, "Sorrow is after weeping: and mortification is after trouble." Puns also are much indulged in, and appreciated as a sign of ready wit, but, without a lengthy explanation of the meaning of the native words, it would be useless giving any examples; and the same may be said of riddles, which, although considered by the people themselves as remarkably clever, are, as a rule, most commonplace.

¹ *See Ellis' Yoruba-Speaking Peoples.*





CHAPTER XXIV.

IN the foregoing chapters we have endeavoured to lay before the reader a plain story of the past, present, and future of British West Africa; the subject being a wide one, many important matters have necessarily been treated somewhat lightly, while others have been altogether neglected. Of these there are certain problems so intimately bound up with the future of our West African possessions, that to leave them neglected might be deemed almost unpardonable; and there are, besides these problems, other minor matters, which, though not of vital importance to the future of the country, are nevertheless of very considerable interest. The chief of those requiring further discussion are the climate and the liquor traffic; the former affects the welfare of the white man, the latter that of the native, but on the successful solution of each and both depend, in no small measure, the future prosperity and value to England of her West African Colonies.

The nature of the climate of this part of Africa and its effect on European residents we have already frequently referred to, and even the untravelled Englishman is fully aware of the fact that there is no more fatal climate in the world; but there are so many points connected with the subject that are often forgotten, or may be unknown, that no apology is needed for dealing with it at length, more especially when it is remembered that, but for the evil repute

of its climate, West Africa would have long since attracted the trade of the world. Is the climate of West Africa really as bad as people make out? is a question which is often asked. We can only say that facts are stubborn things, and a walk through the cemetery of any of our colonies hereabouts will put an end to all doubt as to the unhealthiness of this quarter of the globe, while those who cannot thus indulge their curiosity will find ample proof in a careful study of the Blue Books. There is very little to choose between one part of the West African coast and another, for, as Winwoode Reade says, "The coast is distinguished by being uniformly bad. From the Senegal River to Little Fish Bay, from latitude 15° N. to latitude 15° S., a sinuous coast-line of several thousand miles, there is not a single cubic inch of air which is not in the night-time impregnated with malaria. No European resident escapes fever, and even natives suffer from it, though in a less degree." The coast-line and the low-lying land behind (formed as it is by the detritus of the numerous rivers flowing into the Atlantic) must ever remain a hot-bed of malaria. No human exertion can make it otherwise, and though there are instances of men having survived a residence of even forty years on the Coast, yet we would rather say with Macaulay (himself the son of a West Coast Governor)—

"To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late."

It is quite unnecessary to give the reader the death-rate figures of any particular colony; he will have come across material enough to form an opinion for himself that there is something radically wrong with either the country or the mode of living adopted by the European. Our principal object, therefore, will be to show to what cause is to be attributed the great mortality among those of our countrymen



A MANUBOYE SWAMP.

[To face page 179.]

who, for one reason or another, have to reside in West Africa, and how this mortality might possibly be reduced. First, then, as to the cause. What may be termed the fever-belt consists of the low lands adjacent to the coast, where the heat is great and rendered oppressive and stifling by reason of the copious moisture afforded by the numerous streams and marshes which intersect the country.¹ Added to this there are vast areas of mangrove swamps, composed of soft, slimy mud, the chief constituents of which are decaying vegetation and seaweed. The miasma which rises over the swamps after sundown is almost as dense as a London fog, and the earthy odour can be smelt many miles out at sea. To the white man this is veritable poison, and its inhalation for even a few moments may result in the introduction into the system of sufficient germs to produce malaria of the most virulent type. This form of fever is the principal cause of all the sickness on the coast, and the European, however careful he may be, must receive his baptism of fever before he has been long in West Africa. If he has a strong constitution he shakes it off and is practically none the worse; if, on the other^o hand, he is attacked a second time before he has fully recovered, then his constitution commences to suffer, and every subsequent attack gnaws deeper into the wound, until it becomes a question between a voyage to England and an African grave. With the various prophylactics we do not propose to dwell; everyone bound for the tropics is sure to receive plenty of advice as to the care of his health, which, excellent though it may be, he will find impossible at times to follow. It may

¹ Surgeon-Major E. M. Wilson, C.M.G., late medical officer of Sierra Leone, says that the most unhealthy season is July and August, i.e. the period of the greatest rainfall, the highest relative humidity, and lowest temperature in the shade. Great heat without humidity does not appear to be unhealthy.

happen that during his travels he may be separated for a night from his pocket filter, his respirator, his bottle of quinine, or even his mosquito-curtained bed ; all his good intentions are immediately at an end, and the fatal fever has marked him down. But with the exception of this malaria, it may be doubted if the European has more to contend with than even in India ; cholera is unknown, and enteric fever is much less prevalent than in England, though the place of these two is perhaps more than filled by what is called *blackwater fever*—a most dreaded type of malaria. Its action is swift and deadly, and, like cholera, little is known about it. Dr. E. Adam, of Liverpool, who has made a study of the disease, considers that it is “ produced by the advent into the blood of a *new* malarial parasite, which specially affects the kidneys, etc.,” and that it is practically a new disease. Yellow fever has visited the coast on several occasions, but it may be considered as equivalent to nothing more than an epidemic of scarlet fever in one of our country towns. Dysentery is no more to be feared than in any other hot country, and laying aside for a moment the matter of fever, the only thing likely, as a rule, to affect the white man’s health are petty annoyances, such as “ liver,” boils, prickly-heat, ear-ache, and the *jigger*.¹ The latter is an institution of the West Coast of Africa, and is perhaps something more than a petty annoyance. It is a minute insect, which has the unpleasant habit of depositing its eggs under the toe-nails, burrowing into the skin, and establishing its sack of eggs so firmly that it can only be dislodged by a very sharp-pointed instrument. The difficulty lies in extracting the sack, which, if not taken out whole, leads to the body becoming infested with the parasite, and the old Anglo-African is careful to have his toes examined every morning by the barber, who is an expert in jigger-hunting.

¹ Chigo. *Pulex penetrans*. Common also in East Africa.

Malarial fever is accountable for nine-tenths of the deaths of the Europeans on the Coast ; how many men it invalids home it is impossible to say, since the published statistics stop short at deaths. Now, as we have said, as long as the West Coast of Africa exists, there must be fever, and European residents must be attacked by it ; in olden times, before hinterlands were thought of, merchants and officials were by force of circumstance obliged to live on the narrow strip of low-lying coast, i.e. in the fever zone, but now there is no such necessity, except that the towns are situated by the sea. The limits of the unhealthy part of the country have long been known, and the natural supposition would be that some attempt would be made to avoid it, yet year after year, decade after decade, the white man has been content to follow in the steps of his predecessors, and continue to endeavour to live in what is known to be a perfect death-trap. In many instances there are high and healthy spots within view of the settlement, but Government House and the traders' stores are built by the sea-shore, and the energies of all the Governors of our West Coast possessions have never been able to move them inland. Many a high official has left England with the full intention of improving matters, and the after-dinner speeches of a newly-appointed Governor are generally replete with schemes for cleansing the Augean stable, yet nothing comes of it all, and the graveyards of Africa continue to claim their victims. It possibly never strikes the stay-at-home Englishman that there is anything criminal in England sending her sons to unhealthy colonies, without doing all in her power to minimize the risk to health ; but why should not the doctrine of Employers' Liability apply here equally as in an English factory ? Of course, the answer will be that no one need go to West Africa unless he likes, that he is well paid for the risk, and that consequently he, as it were, "contracts-out." The fact is that nobody

cares sufficiently one way or another; it has long been accepted that the climate of the West Coast of Africa is as deadly as any in the world, and there it is allowed to rest. Were the matter taken earnestly in hand by the home authorities, there is no reason why the stigma which has attached for a century or more to these possessions of ours should not for ever be removed.

The question is one which should be considered in all its aspects, and no expenditure should be deemed too great. The first step would be to remove bodily the administrative headquarters of each colony beyond the fever limit—even, if necessary, twenty or thirty miles inland—connecting these cantonments with the coast by good carriage roads and eventually by railways. This would probably result in every European living in a healthy climate, and in a very short time the merchant would think no more of running down to his stores each day than does the business man who lives in the suburbs of his daily journey to London. Some few Englishmen, such as officers of the garrison, would probably have to live on the coast, but these could be changed at frequent intervals, and their health thus saved from being seriously impaired. The present state of affairs is the most false of economies; an official is sent out, with a good salary, but before he has settled down to work, he has to come home again (if he has not died in the meanwhile), and his relief has to learn the work afresh. The annual saving in passage money alone would cover a goodly expenditure in the way of improvements. But the officials constitute a very small proportion of the Englishmen on the Coast, and the numerous West African merchants should be compelled to do something towards improving the method of living of their white *employés*. This should be legislated for in some way, and the cost of improvements partly covered, either by raising the import duties, or by requiring the employer to pay

so much for every clerk whom he employs, or by obliging him to insure with Government the life of everyone he employs.

This bodily removal inland of the various settlements will probably not come in our day, though it is the only certain cure; yet, leaving the towns where they are, a vast amount of improvement could be effected at a very small cost. Every colony should at least have a sanatorium on the hills, to which the white exile could occasionally pay a visit to recruit his health, and where he could throw off that fatal *ennui* which now pervades everything West African.¹ Reclining in a wicker chair and imbibing "cocktails" after the labours of the day does not conduce to resisting attacks of fever. The water supply also is a matter which requires most particular attention, for in many places the only available drinking-water is that collected in tanks, during the rainy season, off roofs whose cleanliness is not always above suspicion.² The sanitary arrangements are in some instances simply appalling—modern ideas take a long time getting so far afield, and medical officers in colonial employ are not as plentiful as they should be. Another improvement which would benefit the European is an accelerated steamship service, for many a man now arrives at his destination so impregnated with malaria that he is unable to resist even the first attacks of fever. He has beaten down the coast, from port to port, lain in the mouths of a dozen deadly rivers, and spent weeks on a voyage which should have occupied hardly twice as many days, because the captain of the vessel receives a percentage on the cargo, and consequently stops at any little village that has a puncheon of oil to put on board.

¹ It has recently been proposed to establish at the Canaries a sanatorium for the whole of West Africa.

² Pigeons in great numbers are often kept near dwelling-houses. They form a ready medium for the contamination of rain water.

The distance from England of the furthest of our West African possessions is nothing very great,¹ and if direct boats ran from Liverpool to the different ports, even Old Calabar should be within a fortnight's voyage of England, instead of a month or six weeks.

So much for the climate of the coast ; that it is as bad as it well can be it is impossible to deny, but, once beyond the fatal fever belt, there is nothing very wrong with the climate of West Africa, and there is no reason why a European should not stand it as well as he would that of any other tropical country. There is, however, one point worth remarking on, and that is, the stamp of man who goes to West Africa, often altogether physically unfit to go to any tropical climate. He may be too young or he may be too old—there are limits both ways. In the first case, an unformed constitution is most liable to suffer from fever ; while, in the second case, a man who has adopted a certain mode of living is unable suddenly to change everything, live on indifferent food, and give up his beer. For a novice the limits of age may perhaps be placed at twenty-two and thirty-two, though when “salted” a man may continue his visits to the coast up to almost any age. In no part of the world does the survival of the fittest come more to the front than here ; it should therefore be the particular care of all who have a hand in sending young men to West Africa to see that they are likely to survive, and consequently fit in every sense of the word. Yet, if one looks at a steamer's passengers bound for what is termed “Fever-land,” the majority will be found to be traders' agents, fresh from a Liverpool office, with absolutely no knowledge of the country they are going to, or the evils of the life they will be doomed to live. All this will possibly be combated and denied by

¹ From Liverpool, Gambia, 2680 miles ; Sierra Leone, 3078 ; Gold Coast, 3920 ; Lagos, 4279 ; Niger, 4500 ; Old Calabar, 4700.

the old West Coast hands,¹ but we must remember that these are the survivors of the fittest, and are consequently not competent witnesses. If any of them could produce a list of his deceased companions, we should probably find that eighty per cent. of the Englishmen who go to West Africa leave their bones there. To remedy this necessitates careful medical examination of every would-be visitor to West Africa, and a wholesale weeding out of those not likely to be able to withstand the ordeal of the climate. Lastly, we would point out that the leave (well-earned we grant) of the official or trader's agent is too frequently, as a well-informed authority has recently said, "devoted to a continuous spree, eating and drinking too much, passing the afternoon in the atmosphere of a billiard-room, and the evenings at a crowded theatre, and going to bed at absurd hours. When the time comes to resume duty the young man is positively worse, and not better, for his visit to Europe. Once in England, off duty, they begin to dig their own graves."

Without wishing in any way to induce the reader to believe that the West Coast is not much more unhealthy than any part of India, we would point out that a very large percentage of the sickness arises from the inability of the Englishmen to adapt themselves to circumstances and to improve their surroundings. The sole idea of the young official or agent appears to be to get through his eighteen months as best he can, thinking only of the day when he will be homeward bound on six months' leave. He knows nothing of the various methods of settling down in a tropical country, or of making himself comfortable, and those who have gone before him have left him no legacies in this

The late Sir William Maxwell, Governor of the Gold Coast, always maintained that the unhealthiness of the West Coast climate was greatly exaggerated; that all that was required was care in the mode of living. Yet he himself died of malaria on his passage to England, in December, 1897.

direction. We have said enough on this subject, possibly too much ; but, all said and done, there is no problem connected with British West Africa of such vast importance, for, without health, the best-intentioned Government official, missionary, or merchant is able to do nothing. His work ends when his health fails, and though he may have planned vast schemes for improving the country, evangelizing the heathens, or for developing trade, his death or departure from the Coast leaves matters much as he found them on his arrival.

The next important subject is the liquor traffic, i.e. the sale of spirituous liquors by Europeans to natives of West Africa, which has been carried on to a greater or less extent from the time when Europeans first visited the Coast. The slave-trade fostered the sale of arms, powder, and liquor ; the former articles were necessary to the chiefs for raiding to procure slaves, and were written off when the bills for the slaves were paid ; while the actual payment was made principally in liquor. But when the slave-trade was abolished the demand for these articles did not diminish ; powder and guns were still much in request for interior warfare, and the taste for drink had taken possession of the people to such an extent that its eradication appeared hopeless. "The wealth and importance of the various villages," wrote Joseph Thompson, in 1886, "are measured by the size of the pyramids of empty gin bottles which they possess." The trader saw nothing wrong in flooding the country with gin ; it had become the staple import, the chiefs would take little else in exchange for their palm oil, and the numerous Kru labourers refused to be paid in anything but powder and spirits. It is needless here to descant on the evil effects of drink on the people ; we have evidence enough much nearer home of the low state of degradation to which it reduces the lower classes, and this where drink is expensive ;

what is the condition of things in a country where an ordinary man can get dead drunk for rather less than a farthing can be easily imagined. It is a question of which the argument is all on one side, for no sane man, however anti-temperance his ideas may be, would attempt to deny that the wholesale introduction of spirituous liquors into West Africa has been otherwise than a curse to the country. The evils may, we admit, be exaggerated, but that any benefits accrue to the natives from their being able to obtain cheap spirits the trader himself cannot pretend. Yet he will argue, and be supported in his argument by many colonial officials, that the outcry against the liquor traffic is absurd, in face of the fact that reliable evidence is forthcoming to prove that drunkenness in West Africa is barely appreciable—that more drunkenness will be seen on one Fast Day in Glasgow than in a decade in West Africa, and that the average consumption of spirits on the Coast is less by a quarter of a gallon per head per annum than that of Great Britain. These statements are very possibly quite true, but they form a weak defence; for the absence of visible drunkenness leads to the belief that either the drinking is carried on in private, or that the natives have, by long use, become spirit-proof, and the latter supposition would be upheld by anyone who witnessed a West Coast native toss off a tumbler of raw gin. On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence as to the existence of drunkenness on occasions of religious ceremonies and festivities; the Rev. James Johnson mentions an instance, which came to his knowledge, of a great funeral at which liquor to the value of £500 was consumed, and it is an acknowledged fact that nearly every West Coast chief is an habitual drunkard, lying drunk for days together in his house.

But even if it could be proved that the sale of alcohol to the natives did not demoralize them, there are other reasons which should induce the British, at any rate, to endeavour to

check or even suppress the liquor traffic. The rum and gin come almost entirely from America, France, and Germany,¹ and, as Major Lugard says, "The importation of liquor enormously decreases the importation of Manchester and Birmingham goods. The cry is for 'new markets,' and the daily papers teem with unpleasant statistics which go to prove that our trade supremacy is being wrested from us by Germany; yet here in our Crown colonies and protectorates we forego the market that might be ours, and substitute foreign-made goods for our own, from which we derive no profit except such as accrues from a small portion of the carrying trade. Secondly, the purchase of an article which, whether it be pernicious or not, is in any case a merely sensual pleasure effects nothing towards the elevation of the race in the standard of living, and does not promote habits of thrift or industry. If utensils, agricultural implements, or such-like goods were purchased instead of liquor, not only would the African be raised in the plane of civilization, but the output of his industry, enhanced by improved appliances, would be greater and of better quality."² A leading article in the *Times* of the 7th June, 1895, put the matter clearly: "The extension of the trade in spirits is made at the cost of the trade in other European goods. The native who buys gin buys little else, and in those markets in which the green packing cases of imported spirits are seen, other European goods do not appear. It is a case of one trade or the other, but not of both. The spirit trade, like a noxious weed, chokes every other growth in those districts in which it is allowed to flourish. The solution of the material difficulty is to be found in this pregnant fact: while we allow the newly-

¹ In 1894 Lagos imported 1,031,261 gallons of gin and 832,370 gallons of rum, of which 1,029,457 gallons of gin and 806,503 gallons of rum came from Germany.

² *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1897.

opened channels of communication with the interior to be used for the dissemination of the spirit traffic, we destroy with one hand what we are creating with the other."

Until 1890 no attempt was made to check the importation of spirituous liquors, but in that year the Brussels Conference (at which the representatives of seventeen Powers were assembled) took the matter seriously in hand, as second in importance only to the slave-trade—the primary object of the Conference. The Powers were unanimous in their condemnation of the liquor traffic in Africa, and by the Act¹ which was passed, and afterward ratified by the Powers, certain restrictions on the African spirit trade came into operation on the 2nd April, 1892. By Article XC. the zone to be affected by the provisions of the Act was laid down as extending across the entire breadth of Africa (including adjacent islands within 100 miles of the coasts) between the 20th parallel of north latitude and the 22nd parallel of south latitude. Article XCI. prohibited absolutely the importation of spirits into, or their manufacture in, any part of the zone where the trade had not so far penetrated or where the religious beliefs of the people were against the introduction or use of spirits.² This Article also imposed a minimum duty (6½*d.* per gallon) on all spirits imported into those parts of the zone where there was an existing spirit trade. Again, by the same Article, each Power agreed to declare within six months the extent of its possessions infected by or free from a traffic in liquor. While Article XCV. provided that the Powers should periodically give full information to each other about the traffic in alcoholic liquors carried on in their respective possessions or spheres. An optional revision of the General Act of the Conference was arranged to take place on the 2nd April, 1895, and a

¹ Known as the Brussels General Act, 1891-2.

² i.e. the Mohammedan countries.

further obligatory revision on the 2nd April, 1898, but neither of these revisions has taken place.

Since the passing of the Brussels Act, however, considerable agitation has been going on in England in the matter of this pernicious trade, and thanks to the untiring energy of such Associations as the *Native Races and Liquor Traffic United Committee* and the various missionary societies, the British Government has been persuaded to take steps for its suppression. The duties on spirits have been gradually raised in the British possessions, until at the present time we find them to be as follows:—Gambia, 2s. per gallon; Sierra Leone, 3s.; Gold Coast, 2s. 6d.; Lagos, 2s.; Niger Coast Protectorate, 2s.; Territories of the Royal Niger Company, 2s., with total prohibition above latitude 7°. Comparing these with the duties imposed by the other Powers in their possessions: the duty in Portuguese Guinea is 6½d.; French Guinea, 9d.; French Ivory Coast, 3s. 9d.; French Dahomey, 8d.; German Togoland, 1s.; and German Cameroons, 1s. 10d. From the above figures it will be observed that there is considerable variation in the duties imposed in the different British colonies, which arises from the want of co-operation on the part of the neighbouring foreign colonies and the ease with which liquor can be smuggled over the frontier; thus it would be useless to raise the duty in the Niger Coast Protectorate above 2s. so long as the Cameroons' duty is only 1s. 10d. Were all the Powers thoroughly in earnest, and actually desirous of abolishing the West African liquor traffic, there would be no difficulty in the matter, but such a revenue-producing commodity is held to be too valuable to be allowed to disappear altogether. We will take a case haphazard from our own Blue Books. The total revenue of the Niger Coast Protectorate for 1895-6, was £155,513, of which £151,244 was produced by import duties, and of these duties alcoholic liquors made up a sum of no less than £116,320.

With the exception perhaps of the Niger Company's territories, the same state of affairs will be found to exist in most other European West African possessions—i.e. almost four-fifths of the revenue is derived from the sale of spirituous liquors; and this revenue appears to increase with the raising of the liquor duties, for there has been little falling off in the amount of liquor purchased by the natives, even although the duty has been increased from $6\frac{1}{2}d.$ to $2s.$ or $3s.$ It would, therefore, seem as if the Brussels Act had so far effected nothing towards restricting the sale of spirits to the Coast natives, and it is the unanimous opinion of all who have studied the question that no amount of duty will ever prevent the chiefs from obtaining rum and gin, though a heavy duty may make these articles too expensive for the ordinary native. It is, however, impossible for Great Britain to work single-handed, for if she prohibited the import of spirits into her West Coast possessions, the natives would convey their produce into the neighbouring French or German colonies whence liquor could be easily smuggled into British territory, and Kru labour would then in all probability be diverted from the British colonies. The time is hardly yet ripe for total prohibition, and any action tending in this direction must necessarily be gradual, though whatever line England adopts in order to reduce the evils of the traffic to a minimum, the support of the other Powers concerned is absolutely imperative.

In the infected regions of the Coast events must move slowly, and we must be content with even the smallest signs of progress towards the eventual abolition or curtailment of the traffic; it is in the non-infected regions, which are now being rapidly connected with the coast by roads and railways, that immediate action is necessary, so as to prevent the introduction of spirits into countries which have hitherto been without them. This, by the provisions of the Brussels Act,

all the Powers have pledged themselves to do, though there are, unfortunately, loopholes by which the Act can be partially evaded, it being easy to prove that many of the chiefs of the interior have for a long while been supplied with gin and rum by natives trading with the Coast, and that even the Mohammedans (contrary to the commands of the Prophet) have become addicted to drink. But if the agreements entered into at the Brussels Conference are honestly fulfilled, then no intoxicating liquors can be allowed to pass into the Mohammedan countries. The whole question, it will be seen, is one of very great importance, and worthy of the attention of all Englishmen who have at heart the reputation and commercial prosperity of their own country and the welfare of the natives of Africa. By the continuance of the traffic, we repeat, Manchester and Birmingham are losing valuable markets for their goods, while the gin-producers across the Channel are growing wealthy; this fact alone should appeal even to the Englishman (if there exists such an one) who is averse to philanthropy, morality, temperance, missionary labours, or the civilization of the negro. We will conclude by quoting from a speech made at Grosvenor House by Sir George Goldie (May 3rd, 1895):—"I speak from sixteen years' experience . . . and I say confidently that unless immediate steps are taken to stop this traffic—not by higher duties, but by absolute prohibition—a state of things will soon be brought about that must ultimately lead to the entire abandonment of the country . . . I cannot believe that the conscience of Europe will long allow that the vast populous regions of tropical Africa should be used only as a cesspool of European alcohol."

Recalling to mind the many unpleasant facts set forth with regard to British West Africa in this volume, the reader may feel inclined to ask where lie the redeeming points of the country. He has been told that a wide fever belt stretches everywhere inland from the sea; that the climate

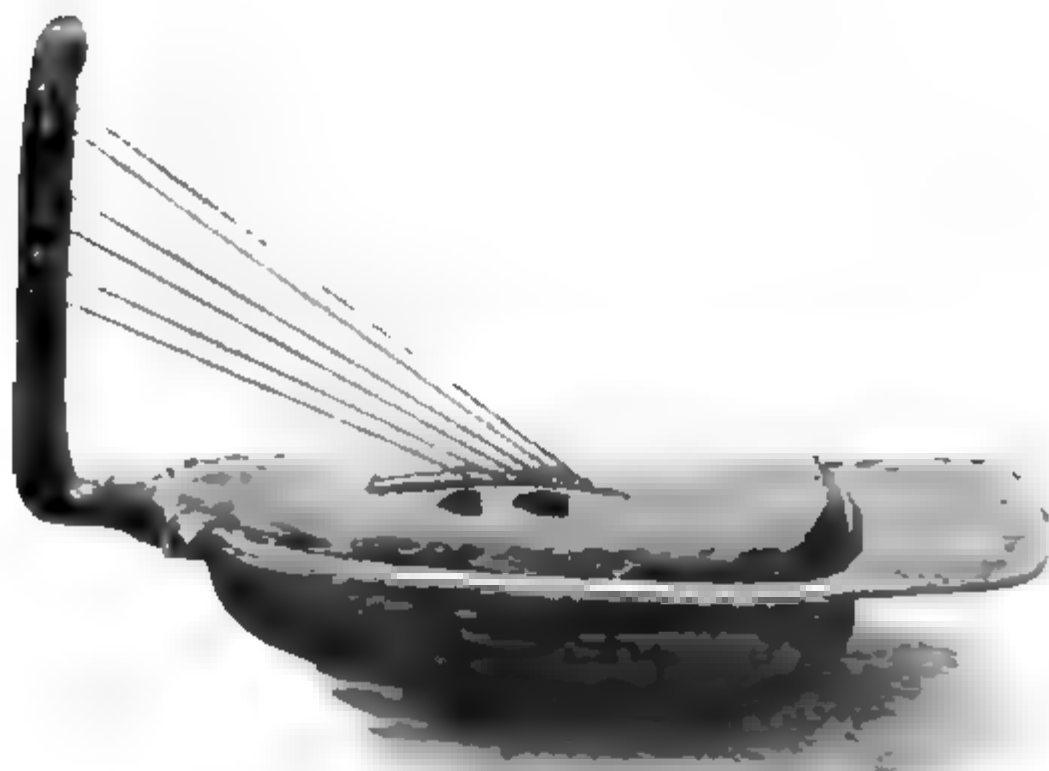
of every British port is pestilential to a degree ; that the most modern sanitary arrangements have proved futile in reducing the death-rate of Europeans ; and that the natives themselves suffer from the effects of the climate. He has been led to believe that, for the most part, the natives dwelling in the coast regions are heathens, drunkards, robbers, murderers, and cannibals. He has learned that, in spite of a century of missionary work, the old pagan superstitions and barbarous rites have the upper hand ; that slavery is a domestic institution almost impossible to eradicate ; that slave-raiding is the acknowledged profession of thousands of the population ; and that the cost of maintenance of the European administrations is defrayed by an immoral and degrading traffic in vile and pernicious spirits, retarding all other trade. The record is indeed a black one, but by carefully scanning the horizon, it will be found that each of these clouds, which go to form the dark nimbus overhanging West Africa, possesses something of the nature of a silver lining. The clouds, it is hoped, will in the course of time drift away, and leave nothing but sunshine to brighten the lot of the negro. It must be remembered that until a very few years ago the greater part of what now constitutes British West Africa was a *terra incognita* ; that British authority had not been extended beyond the fever belt, and that it is the interior countries, with their healthy climates and more civilized populations, that are now regarded as the redeeming points. If it were not so, and if there were no future before the various inland territories, it is hardly probable that the relations between European nations would become strained when discussing the rights of ownership of a few square miles of African land.

The climate ¹ of these hinterlands (Hausaland, for example)

¹ In the Western Soudan there are seven dry months and five wet (May to October).

compares not unfavourably with that of India; they are not, it is true, suitable for European colonization, but Europeans can reside therein for several years in succession without any ill effects—and they can even enjoy life. The soil is fertile and is capable of producing crops in abundance; with the establishment of a more settled form of government and improvements in communications, the old Hausa States have prospects as brilliant as any part of tropical Africa; and that the British Government is alive to the importance of developing the regions is vouched for by the fact that within the last few months Lokoja has become the headquarters of an Imperial force consisting of two newly-raised Yoruba regiments, each 1000 strong and with a full complement of British officers and non-commissioned officers, while a flotilla of gunboats for patrolling the Middle Niger and Benué rivers is stationed at the Confluence. With these forces at his command, Colonel Lugard, the Imperial Commissioner, will have no difficulty in dealing with the slave-raiders as they deserve, and in producing among the pagan inhabitants a feeling of peace and tranquility never before known in the country. That there are difficulties to be faced in all our West African colonies and hinterlands it is impossible to deny, but that there are means at hand for, in a great measure, overcoming these difficulties we have attempted to show. The present generation may not live to see a model West Africa, with Europeans residing beyond the fever-belt, with cannibalism and human sacrifices confined to the folk-tales of the negro, with slavery and slave-raiding stamped out, and with a Gothenburg system controlling intoxicating liquors. Nor, again, may even the next generation bear witness to such a West African millennium. But it is pleasant to think that after several centuries of neglect—worse still, of weed-sowing—the European husbandman has at length commenced to scatter broadcast seeds which, though they

may take time to germinate and mature, must eventually yield a harvest whose riches will be shared alike by himself and by his African brother. It is pleasant also to remember that in each important reform Great Britain has led the way; that British explorers, philanthropists, merchants, and missionaries have been everywhere first in the field, and have sacrificed their lives and their money in the development of the country; that any amelioration in the condition of the negro that has arisen of recent years has been due to the supervising care and attention of the British Government, and to the energy of the various officials entrusted with the administration of British West Africa.



APPENDIX.

CONVENTION BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE, SIGNED AT PARIS, JUNE 14TH, 1898.

THE Government of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and the Government of the French Republic, having agreed, in a spirit of mutual goodwill, to confirm the Protocol with its four Annexes prepared by their respective delegates for the delimitation of the British Colonies of the Gold Coast, Lagos, and the other British possessions to the west of the Niger, and of the French possessions of the Ivory Coast, Sudan, and Dahomey, as well as for the delimitation of the British and French possessions and the spheres of influence of the two countries to the east of the Niger, the undersigned, his Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Edmund Monson, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, accredited to the President of the French Republic, and his Excellency M. Gabriel Hanotaux, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic, duly authorized to this effect, confirm the Protocol with its Annexes, drawn up at Paris the 14th day of June, 1898, the text of which is as follows:—

PROTOCOL.

The undersigned, Martin Gosselin, Minister Plenipotentiary and Secretary of Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy at Paris; William Everett, a Colonel in Her Britannic Majesty's land forces and an Assistant Adjutant-General in the Intelligence Division of the War Office; René Lecomte, Minister Plenipotentiary, Assistant Sub-Director in the Department of Political Affairs in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; Louis Gustave Binger, Colonial Governor, unattached, Director of African Affairs at the Ministry of the Colonies; delegated respectively by the Government of Her Britannic Majesty and by the Government of the French Republic in order to draw up,

in conformity with the Declarations exchanged at London on the 5th August, 1890, and the 15th January, 1896, a draft of definite delimitation between the British Colonies of the Gold Coast, Lagos, and the other British possessions to the west of the Niger and the French possessions of the Ivory Coast, the Sudan, and Dahomey; and between the British and French possessions and the spheres of influence of the two countries to the east of the Niger, have agreed to the following provisions, which they have resolved to submit for the approval of their respective Governments.

Article I.

The frontier separating the British Colony of the Gold Coast from the French Colonies of the Ivory Coast and Sudan shall start from the northern terminal point of the frontier laid down in the Anglo-French Agreement of the 12th July, 1893, viz. the intersection of the thalweg of the Black Volta with the 9th degree of north latitude, and shall follow the thalweg of this river northward up to its intersection with the 11th degree of north latitude. From this point it shall follow this parallel of latitude eastward as far as the river shown on Map No. 1, annexed to the present Protocol, as passing immediately to the east of the villages of Zwaga (Souaga) and Zebilla (Sebilla), and it shall then follow the thalweg of the western branch of this river up stream to its intersection with the parallel of latitude passing through the village of Sapeliga. From this point the frontier shall follow the northern limits of the lands belonging to Sapeliga as far as the River Nuhau (Nouhau), and shall then follow the thalweg of this river up or down stream, as the case may be, to a point situated 2 miles (3219 metres) eastward of the road which leads from Gambaga to Tenkrûgu (Tingourkou), viâ Bawku (Baukou). Thence it shall rejoin by a straight line the 11th degree of north latitude at the intersection of this parallel with the road which is shown on Map No. 1, as leading from Sansanne Mango to Pama viâ Jebigu (Djebiga).

Article II.

The frontier between the British Colony of Lagos and the French Colony of Dahomey, which was delimited on the ground by the Anglo-French Boundary Commission of 1895, and which is described in the Report signed by the Commissioners of the two nations on the 12th October, 1896, shall henceforward be recognized as the frontier separating the British and French possessions from the sea to the 9th degree of north latitude.

From the point of intersection of the River Ocpara with the 9th degree of north latitude, as determined by the said Commissioners,

the frontier separating the British and French possessions shall proceed in a northerly direction, and follow a line passing west of the lands belonging to the following places, viz. Tabira, Okuta (Okouta), Boria, Tere, Gbani, Ashigere (Yassikéra), and Dekala.

From the most westerly point of the lands belonging to Dekala the frontier shall be drawn in a northerly direction so as to coincide as far as possible with the line indicated on Map No. 1 annexed to the present Protocol, and shall strike the right bank of the Niger at a point situated 10 miles (16,093 metres) up-stream from the centre of the town of Gere (Guiris) (the port of Ilo), measured as the crow flies.

Article III.

From the point specified in Article II., where the frontier separating the British and French possessions strikes the Niger, viz. a point situated on the right bank of that river, 10 miles (16,093 metres) up-stream from the centre of the town of Gere (Guiris) (the port of Ilo), the frontier shall follow a straight line drawn therefrom at right angles to the right bank as far as its intersection with the median line of the river. It shall then follow the median line of the river, up-stream, as far as its intersection with a line drawn perpendicularly to the left bank from the median line of the mouth of the depression or dry water-course, which, on Map No. 2 annexed to the present Protocol, is called the Dallul Mauri, and is shown thereon as being situated at a distance of about 17 miles (27,359 metres), measured as the crow flies, from a point on the left bank opposite the above-mentioned village of Gere (Guiris).

From this point of intersection the frontier shall follow this perpendicular till it meets the left bank of the river.

Article IV.

To the east of the Niger the frontier separating the British and French possessions shall follow the line indicated on Map No. 2, which is annexed to the present Protocol.

Starting from the point on the left bank of the Niger indicated in the previous Article, viz. the median line of the Dallul Mauri, the frontier shall follow this median line until it meets the circumference of a circle drawn from the centre of the town of Sokoto with a radius of 100 miles (160,932 metres). From this point it shall follow the northern arc of this circle as far as its second intersection with the 14th parallel of north latitude. From this second point of intersection it shall follow this parallel eastward for a distance of 70 miles (112,652 metres); then proceed due south until it reaches the parallel

of 13° 20' north latitude, then eastward along this parallel for a distance of 250 miles (402,230 metres); then due north until it regains the 14th parallel of north latitude, then eastwards along this parallel as far as its intersection with the meridian passing 35' east of the centre of the town of Kuka, and thence this meridian southward until its intersection with the southern shore of Lake Chad.

The Government of the French Republic recognizes, as falling within the British sphere, the territory to the east of the Niger, comprised within the above-mentioned line, the Anglo-German frontier, and the sea.

The Government of Her Britannic Majesty recognizes, as falling within the French sphere, the northern, eastern, and southern shores of Lake Chad, which are comprised between the point of intersection of the 14th degree of north latitude, with the western shore of the lake and the point of incidence on the shore of the lake of the frontier determined by the Franco-German Convention of the 15th March, 1894.

Article I.

The frontiers set forth in the present Protocol are indicated on the annexed Maps, which are marked 1 and 2 respectively.

The two Governments undertake to appoint within a year as regards the frontiers west of the Niger, and within two years as regards the frontier east of that river, to count in each case from the date of the exchange of ratifications of the Convention which is to be concluded between them for the purpose of confirming the present Protocol, Commissioners who will be charged with delimiting on the spot the lines of demarcation between the British and French possessions, in conformity and in accordance with the spirit of the stipulations of the present Protocol.

With respect to the delimitation of the portion of the Niger in the neighbourhood of Ilo and the Dallul Mauri referred to in Article III., the Boundary Commissioners shall, in determining on the spot the river frontier, distribute equitably between the two Contracting Powers such islands as may be found to interfere with the delimitation of the river as defined in Article III.

It is understood between the two Contracting Powers that no subsequent alteration in the position of the median line of the river shall affect the ownership of the islands assigned to each of the two Powers by the *procès-verbal* of the Commissioners, after being duly approved by the two Governments.

Article II.

The two Contracting Powers engage reciprocally to treat with consideration ("bienveillance") the native Chiefs who, having had Treaties

with one of them, shall, in virtue of the present Protocol, come under the sovereignty of the other.

Article VII.

Each of the two Contracting Powers undertakes not to exercise any political action in the spheres of the other as defined by Articles I., II., III., and IV. of the present Protocol.

It is understood by this that each Power will not, in the spheres of the other, make territorial acquisitions, conclude Treaties, accept sovereign rights or Protectorates, nor hinder nor dispute the influence of the other.

Article VIII.

Her Britannic Majesty's Government will grant on lease to the Government of the French Republic, for the objects and on the conditions specified in the Form of Lease annexed to the present Protocol, two pieces of ground to be selected by the Government of the French Republic in conjunction with Her Britannic Majesty's Government, one of which will be situated in a suitable spot on the right bank of the Niger between Leaba and the junction of the River Moussa (Mochi) with the former river, and the other on one of the mouths of the Niger. Each of these pieces of land shall have a river frontage not exceeding 400 metres in length, and shall form a block, the area of which shall not be less than ten nor more than fifty hectares in extent. The exact boundaries of these pieces of land shall be shown on a plan annexed to each of the leases.

The conditions upon which the transit of merchandise shall be carried on on the Niger, its affluents, its branches and outlets, as well as between the piece of ground between Leaba and the junction of the River Moussa (Mochi) mentioned above, and the point upon the French frontier to be specified by the Government of the French Republic will form the subject of Regulations, the details of which shall be discussed by the two Governments immediately after the signature of the present Protocol.

Her Britannic Majesty's Government undertake to give four months' notice to the French Government of any modification in the Regulations in question, in order to afford to the said French Government the opportunity of laying before the British Government any representations which it may wish to make.

Article IX.

Within the limits defined on Map No. 2, which is annexed to the present Protocol, British subjects and British protected persons and French citizens and French protected persons, as far as regards their persons and goods, and the merchandise the produce or the manu-

facture of Great Britain and France, their respective Colonies, Possessions, and Protectorates, shall enjoy for thirty years from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of the Convention mentioned in Article V. the same treatment in all matters of river navigation, of commerce, and of Tariff and fiscal treatment and taxes of all kinds.

Subject to this condition, each of the two Contracting Powers shall be free to fix, in its own territory, and as may appear to it most convenient, the Tariff and fiscal treatment and taxes of all kinds.

In case neither of the two Contracting Powers shall have notified twelve months before the expiration of the above-mentioned term of thirty years its intention to put an end to the effects of the present Article, it shall remain in force until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the Contracting Powers shall have denounced it.

In witness whereof, the undersigned Delegates have drawn up and signed the present Protocol.

Done at Paris, in duplicate, the 14th day of June, in the year of our Lord 1898.

(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.
WILLIAM EVERETT.
RENÉ LECOMTE.
G. BINGER.

ANNEX 3.

Although the delineation of the lines of demarcation on the two Maps annexed to the present Protocol are supposed to be generally accurate, it cannot be considered as an absolutely correct representation of those lines until it has been confirmed by new surveys.

It is therefore agreed that the Commissioners or local Delegates of the two countries, hereafter appointed to delimit the whole or part of the frontiers on the ground, shall be guided by the description of the frontier as set forth in the Protocol.

They shall, at the same time, be permitted to modify the said lines of demarcation for the purpose of delineating them with greater accuracy, and also to rectify the position of the watersheds, roads, or rivers, as well as of towns or villages indicated on the maps above referred to.

Any alterations or corrections proposed by common consent by the said Commissioners or Delegates shall be submitted for the approval of their respective Governments.

(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.
WILLIAM EVERETT.
RENÉ LECOMTE.
G. BINGER.

ANNEX 4.

Form of Lease.

1. The Government of Her Britannic Majesty grants in lease to the Government of the French Republic the piece of land situated of the Niger River, having a river frontage in length, and forming a block of hectares in extent, the exact boundaries of which are shown on the plan annexed to this lease.

2. The lease shall run for thirty years uninterruptedly, commencing from the , but in case neither of the two Contracting Powers shall have notified twelve months before the expiration of the above-mentioned term of thirty years its intention to put an end to the present lease, it shall remain in force until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the Contracting Powers shall have denounced it.

3. The said land shall be subject to the laws for the time being in force in the British Protectorate of the Niger districts.

4. A portion of the land so leased, which shall not exceed ten hectares in extent, shall be used exclusively for the purposes of the landing, storage, and transhipment of goods, and for such purposes as may be considered subsidiary thereto, and the only permanent residents shall be the persons employed in the charge and for the security of such goods, their families, and servants.

5. The Government of the French Republic binds itself—

(a) To fence in that portion of the said land referred to in Article 4 of this lease (with the exception of the side which faces the River Niger) by a wall, or by a stockade, or by any other sort of continuous fence, which shall not be less in height than three metres. There shall be one door only on each of the three sides of the fence.

(b) Not to permit on the said portion of land the receipt or exit of any goods in contravention of the British Customs Regulations. Any act in violation of this stipulation shall be considered as evasion of customs duties, and shall be punished accordingly.

(c) Not to sell nor allow the sale of any goods in retail in the said portion of land. The sale of quantities less in weight or measure than 1000 kilog., 1000 litres, or 1000 metres is held to be sale in retail. It is understood that this stipulation shall not apply to goods in transit.

(d) The Government of the French Republic, or its sub-lessees or agents, shall have the right to build on the said portion of land warehouses, houses for offices, and other buildings necessary for the operations of landing, storing, and transhipping goods, and also to construct on that part of the foreshore of the River Niger comprised in the lease quays, bridges, and docks, and any other works

required in connection with the said operations, provided that the designs of all works so to be constructed on the foreshore of the river are furnished to the British authorities for examination, in order to ascertain that these works would not in any way inconvenience the navigation of the river, or be in conflict with the rights of others, or with the Customs system.

(e) It is understood that the shipping, landing, and storing of goods on the said portion of land shall be conducted in all respects in accordance with the laws for the time being in force in the British Protectorate of the Niger districts.

6. The Government of the French Republic binds itself to pay annually to Her Majesty's Government, on the 1st January of each year, a rent of 1 fr.

7. The Government of the French Republic shall have the right to sublet the whole or any portion of the land passing under this lease, provided that the sub-lessees shall not use the land for any other purposes than those stipulated in this lease, and that the said Government shall remain responsible to the Government of Her Britannic Majesty for the observance of the stipulations of this lease.

8. The Government of Her Britannic Majesty binds itself to fulfil towards the lessee all duties incumbent upon it as owner of the said land.

9. At the expiration of the term of thirty years specified in Article 2 of this lease, the French Government, or its sub-lessees may remain in possession and in the enjoyment for a period of time which, together with the said terms of thirty years, shall not exceed ninety-nine years, of the constructions and installations which shall have been made on the leased land. Nevertheless, the Government of Her Britannic Majesty reserves to itself, on the expiration or determination of the lease, in accordance with the conditions specified in Article 2, the right of purchasing such constructions and installations at a valuation to be determined by experts who will be appointed by the two Governments, on the understanding that notification of their intention be furnished to the French Government ten months, at latest, before the expiration or determination of the lease. In case of disagreement between them, the experts shall choose a referee, whose decision shall be final.

In calculating the value of the above-mentioned constructions and installations, the experts shall be guided by the following considerations :—

(a) In the event of the lease expiring at the end of the first thirty years, the purchase value of the property to be sold shall be the full market value.

(b) In the event of the lease being determined at any time

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after thirty years, the value of the property to be sold shall be the full market value less a fraction, whose numerator shall be the number of years the lease has run, minus thirty, and whose denominator shall be sixty-nine.

10. The land comprised in the lease shall be measured and marked out without delay.

11. If a difference of opinion should arise between the two Governments as to the interpretation of the lease, or as to any matter arising in connection therewith, it shall be settled by the arbitration of a jurisconsult of third nationality to be agreed upon by the two Governments.

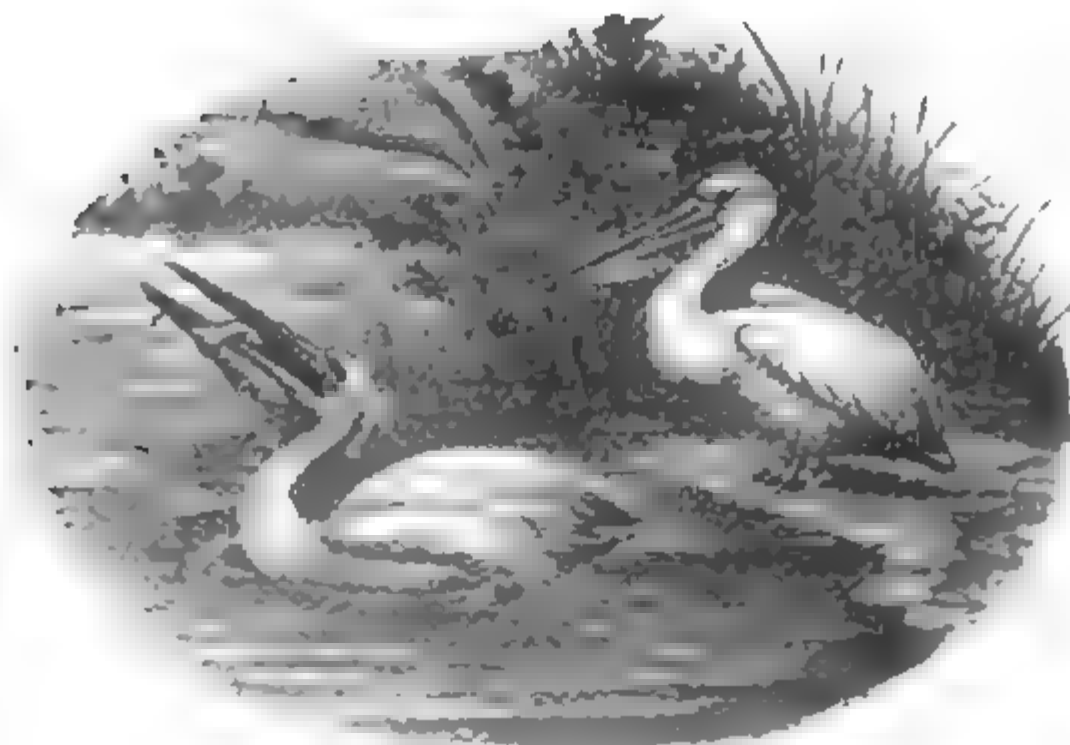
(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.
WILLIAM EVERETT.
RENÉ LACOMTE.
G. BINGER.

The present Convention shall be ratified, and the ratifications exchanged at Paris within the period of six months, or sooner if possible.

In witness whereof the undersigned have signed the present Convention, and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done in duplicate at Paris, the 14th June, 1898.

(Signed) EDMUND MONSON.
G. HANOTAUX.



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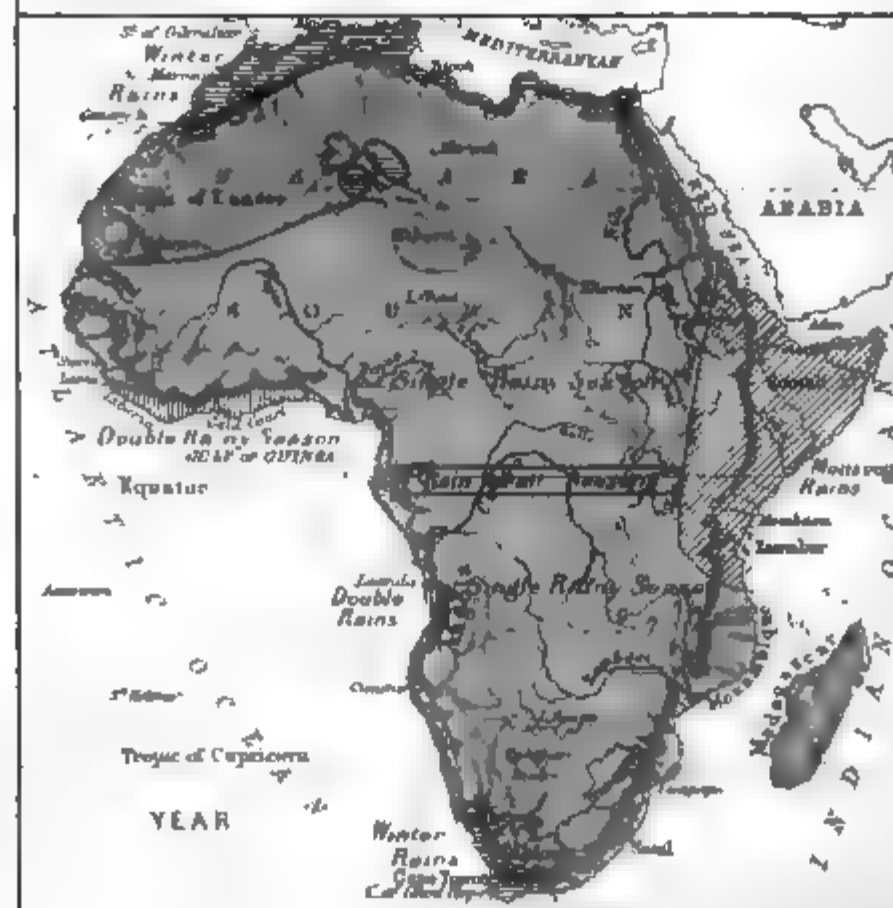
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